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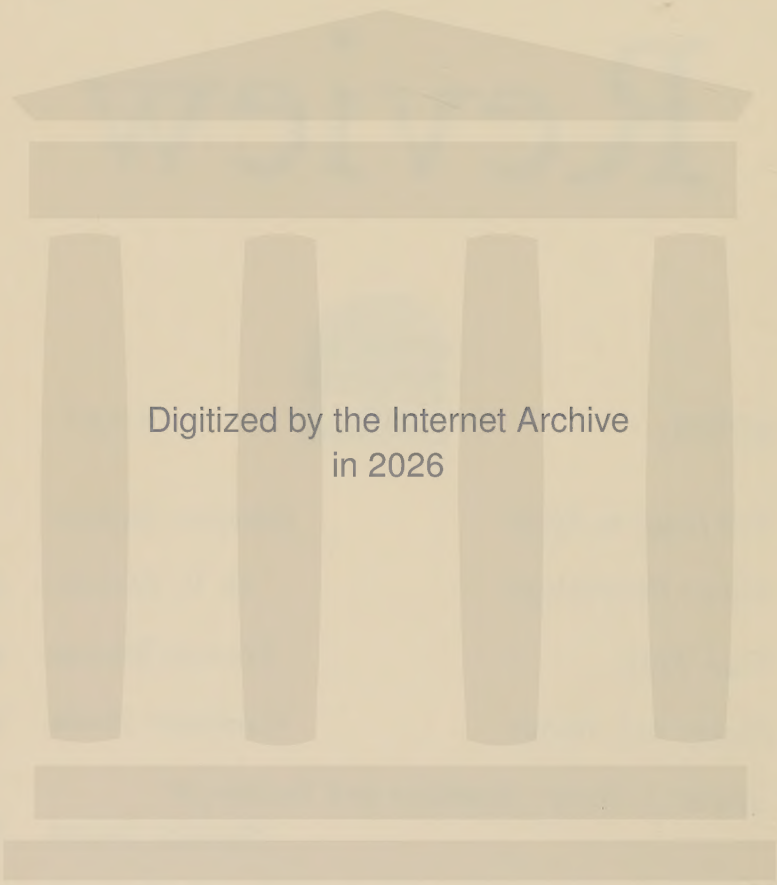
APRIL 1937

The Issues in Spain	DOUGLAS JERROLD	1
More's Christology	G. R. ELLIOTT	35
Two Texts	HILAIRE BELLOC	47
Poetry and Morals	GEOFFREY STONE	58
Arthur J. Penty: Architect and Sociologist	STANLEY JAMES	80
Reading at Random	DOROTHEA BRANDE COLLINS	100
Reviews		114

VOLUME IX NUMBER 1



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The AMERICAN REVIEW

VOLUME NINE NUMBER ONE

APRIL 1937

The Issues in Spain

DOUGLAS JERROLD

[Editor's Note. — *Written originally for an English audience, this article by a distinguished English author, editor, and soldier, the former editor of* The English Review, *provides an exposition of the issues involved in the Spanish civil war which should be useful in this country, where false propaganda has been at least as effective as elsewhere.*]

TO WISH to understand the Spanish situation is not enough. It is necessary also to know a good deal of recent Spanish history, to have made some little study of the art of war, to have a journalist's training in the assimilation of facts, and above all to realize the part played by propaganda in a conflict of vital interest, on the one hand, to Spain, and, on the other, to the revolutionary forces who have made Spain their battleground.

The last elections held in Spain showed an almost exact balance of opinion between the forces of the Right and the Left, although the actual majority of votes was for the Right. It is not honest, however,

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to use this simple statistical fact as a premiss on which to base the conclusion that Spain is today in any way equally divided. The parties of the Left coalition which "won" the election were, on the estimate most favorable to the revolutionary thesis, no farther to the left in their political allegiance than those which supported Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's last Labour Administration. Some of their most prominent supporters – Unamuno and Madariaga, for instance – were definitely not so far to the left, and would, in the English Parliament of 1929, have found themselves on the Liberal benches. The forces controlling Madrid today are, on the estimate most favorable to the revolutionary thesis, as far to the left as Mr. Pollitt, Sir Stafford Cripps, and Mr. Maxton. Let us concede that mere ignorance of the opinions of the thirty-one parties represented in the Spanish Cortes, and of the views of the leading politicians, may account for the initial failure of English public opinion to realize the nature of the change which took place when Largo Caballero assumed control. It is, however, impossible to accept ignorance as an adequate explanation today, when men like Alcalá Zamora, the founder of the republic, Señor Madariaga, the best known of Spanish liberal politicians in Europe, and the late Professor Unamuno, the *doyen* of Spanish liberal intellectuals, have testified to the truth. Two years ago these men's word was taken as gospel in every studio in Bloomsbury and in every left-wing political club throughout England. Alas! the refusal to listen to these men, long honored in the councils of European liberalism, is not the only evidence going to prove that we are faced in this matter, not with

an honest error of judgement, but with a corrupt attempt deliberately to mislead public opinion in Western Europe. The men who see in the so-called Spanish Government at Valencia the representative champions of ordered constitutional government are saying what, today at any rate, they should know to be false and what some of them knew to be false from the very start.

In October, 1934, when the Spanish Moderates were in power – the Government being a coalition between the Radicals under Señor Lerroux and the Catholic Constitutional Democrats (*Acción Popular*) under Señor Gil Robles – a Communist revolt broke out. Two days before its outbreak, *The Daily Herald* (London) announced an impending Fascist *coup d'état*, and, when the Communist revolt occurred, it was described as a reaction against the attempt of the "Fascist leader", Gil Robles, to assume supreme power. I wrote to *The Daily Herald* pointing out that Gil Robles was not a Fascist and that his views were as moderate, at the very least, as those of Mr. Baldwin. This fact was, of course, common knowledge. It was a fact as well known to everyone in Europe as that M. Blum is a Socialist, Herr Hitler a Nazi, and Sir John Simon a Liberal. *The Daily Herald* refused to publish my letter on the ground that they were sending it to their Madrid correspondent to ascertain the truth of the matter. The significance of this action lies here. In May of last year the detailed plans were laid for a Communist rising in Spain in June or July. Those plans have been for some months in the possession of the Salamanca Government and the documents containing them are familiar

to many journalists in this country. They provide a careful time-table for the outbreak of the revolution and the organization of revolutionary cadres and give the personnel of the revolutionary Government, with Largo Caballero at its head. The paragraphs detailing the arrangements for the beginning of the revolution contain the statement that immediately the signal – five maroons – is given a Fascist rising is to be simulated. It is evident, not only that this "simulation" was equally deliberate in October, 1934, but that the fact that a Fascist rising was to be simulated was made known in advance to Labour politicians in England. The following is the text of the relevant paragraphs from the document "Confidential Report No. 3", issued in April, 1936:

Plan to be followed in Madrid.—The signal for beginning the movement will be the bursting of five small bombs at nightfall. Immediately thereafter a pretended Fascist attack on the Club of the C.N.T. [National Confederation of Labor] will be staged, a general strike will be declared, and the soldiers implicated will rise in the barracks. The "radios" will begin to act, the T.U.V. undertaking to seize the General Post and Telegraph Office, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Ministry of War. The district "radios" will attack the Police Stations, and the X.Y.Z. the Police Headquarters. A special "radio" composed solely of machine-gunners and bombers will attack the Ministry of "Gobernación" [Interior] from the following streets: Carretas; Montera; Mayor; Correos; Paz; Alcalá; Preciados; Carmen; and San Geronimo. The "radios" will act with fifty cells of ten men each in the streets of first importance and avenues, and with only two cells in the streets of secondary and tertiary importance.

One, at least, of the meetings at which these plans for a rising in June or July of last year were drawn up was attended by French and Russian Communists officially representing their parties. The following is from the document "Private Report":

On May 15 a meeting took place in the Casa del Pueblo [Labor Exchange] at Valencia. This meeting was attended by a delegate of the Third International, Ventura, and, on behalf of the Central Body of the Revolutionary Committee for Spain, Messrs. Aznar, Rafael Perez, and several others. The three persons mentioned by their names have just arrived from France, where they exchanged views with the delegation of the French Communist Party and the C.G.T., at which meeting comrades Garpius, Thorez, and Freycinet attended, and it was decided to carry out a joint revolutionary movement in the two countries about the middle of June, by which date they presumed that the French Popular Front would have taken over power and Léon Blum would be Prime Minister. The full meeting at Valencia was also attended by Lomovioff and Tourochoff of the U.S.S.R. . . .

(8) To hold a meeting at Madrid on June next at the premises of the International Library at Calle Pablo Iglesias, No. 11 Chamartín de la Rosa, to which the following are invited: Thorez, Cachin, Auriol, Fonchaus, Ventura, Dimitroff, Largo Caballero, Diaz, Carrillo, Guillermo Anton, Pestana, Garcia Oliver, and Aznar.

(9) To entrust one of the Madrid radios – No. 25, composed of active members of the Police Force – with the task of eliminating the prominent political and military men likely to play an important rôle in the counter-revolution.

[The other decisions – of almost equal interest – are omitted for reasons of space.]

Although the full details of the plot were not known until later (actually two sets of these documents were captured at different times and places), the existence of the plot was known to many, and the murder of Calvo Sotelo was accepted by all parties, both of the Right and the Left, as the signal that the revolution had begun. To be fair, there was on July 19th little pretense in Spain itself that it was anything but a Communist revolution which had broken out. In all the villages in the South, and in the ports, bands of revolutionaries went about the streets crying, not "Down with the army" or "Long live constitutional government", but "Long live the revolution" or "Long live anarchy" (this last in the towns, where the Anarchists were more powerful than their Communist allies). I state this on the authority of non-political Norwegian and English travellers who were eye-witnesses. One need not impute too much disinterested frankness to the revolutionaries. They could not, in practice, take up any other line. There were no Communists in the Administration, as first formed after the elections, and the control, where the revolution broke out, was taken over in every town and village (except in Madrid) by the official Communist or Anarchist leaders, men personally known to their fellow townsmen or villagers. They were not crypto-revolutionaries. They had been open and avowed in their political views for years. They represented a ruthless and determined minority, they were armed and organized, and when they were not met by men of equal determination, also armed and also organized, they had no difficulty in assuming dictatorial powers. In Madrid, in Barcelona, and in the seaports

the civil authorities armed the mob against the troops and the police, and acquiesced in the *coup d'état*, even if we suppose (and this is to suppose a lot) that they were not privy to it at the outset.

The parties of the Right, forewarned, were not forearmed, but, on the contrary, largely disarmed. The Government, even if not privy to the Communist plot, was at any rate determined not to use force against the Communist bands whose outrages in the six months before the war had brought ordered life in Spain to a standstill. Either to facilitate the revolution or to provide themselves with an excuse for inaction in the face of anticipated outrages, they had denuded the barracks. They had also, for some months, been retiring the best officers and appointed in their place political nominees of dubious character and no military qualifications. General Franco had warned the Government in writing, long before the military revolt, of the consequence of their actions. If the army was destroyed the last bulwark against the régime of murder and pillage would be removed. This position he was not prepared to accept.

Had the Government taken General Franco's warning to heart and accepted the responsibility of maintaining order the Communist revolution would still have broken out, but it would have been suppressed, as it was in October, 1934. But not amid the applause of those who say today that they stand for constitutional government. The very same people in England, who use this flagrantly dishonest argument in defense of Largo Caballero's Revolutionary Junta, were openly supporting the Communist rebels in 1934. Professors, pacifists, League of Nations men,

politicians in exile, joined in 1934 with the professional revolutionaries to pour abuse on a genuinely constitutional government, with an unchallengeable parliamentary majority and an overwhelming preponderance of votes, which was engaged in suppressing an armed rebellion. The same abuse would have been hurled at any Government which in the spring of 1936 had dared to challenge the Red agitation.

The depth of the Spanish Government's criminality is clearly shown by the history of the so-called "military" counter-revolution of July. Queipo de Llano took Seville with 183 men. Mola at Pamplona had 500 men; but by the evening of the first day both generals had 5000 men under their command and in two days had established their authority, never challenged from that day to this, over Cadiz and Seville in the south and Burgos, Pamplona, and Saragossa in the north. In Salamanca, in Mallorca, in the Canaries, and, above all, in Morocco it was the same story. In Madrid, in Barcelona, and the eastern seaports the Nationalist leaders allowed themselves to be shut in their barracks while the mob were armed and the general body of citizens had no chance of expressing their view.

In Seville, before Queipo de Llano's brilliant and audacious *coup*, there had been six months of intolerable anarchy. Business was at a standstill, churches in ruins, and religion practised at deadly peril – the work, not of "the people" (to say that is a gross libel on Spain), but of a desperate, cruel, and ruthless minority of convinced revolutionaries assisted, as always, by the gangster and hooligan element which disfigures all great industrial cities.

In a flash everything was changed. Seville was never "conquered" by the military. Its own citizens conquered chaos and even lethargy and put an end by their free choice to a shameful period of license and disorder. Had there been anything short of an overwhelming majority for the new régime, Queipo de Llano's *coup* would have been impossible. The same is true of the other cities which sided from the beginning with the national leaders.

The Government at Madrid was itself under no illusions whatever. Fernando de los Rios was sent at once to Paris to arrange for foreign help, and his letter to Don José Giral, then Prime Minister, extracts from which are printed below, gives a clear indication both of the nature of his instructions and of the reception given him by the French Government.

To His Excellency Don José Giral, President of the Council of Ministers.

Paris, July 25, 1936.

Dear Friend, — I refrain from entering into details because the advanced hour at which I start to write this letter, after a last conversation with the Government. . . .

We examined our demands and, from the attitude of the Ministers, I gathered that there existed a divergency of opinions. A new question arose; that Spanish aviators should come to Paris to fetch the machines; I pointed out the semi-impossibility of this owing to our scarcity of personnel and to our intention of retaining the French pilots. I was told, by one in a position to say this, that the whole consignment of airplanes and bombs was ready and could leave in the morning of today. . . . I retired to sleep, and one hour later I was urgently aroused; the Air Minister, P. Cot, wished to visit me; he had inquired

for me at the Embassy, and not finding me there, I was advised by mutual friends that in order not to awaken more suspicion, I should go to his house; I went there, and he told me it was impossible to convince the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the legality of French pilots in taking airplanes to Spain, the formula was to take them to Perpignan, etc.; this is what I communicated last night, the 24th.

When I went this morning to the Air Ministry everything was going well; when I arrived at the Potez firm the difficulties seemed unsurmountable. The Press campaign and the publication of the documents in which the Counsellor [of the Spanish Embassy] resigns loom so big, that when Blum went this morning to see the President of the Republic he found him perturbed and in such a state of mind that he said: "What is being planned, this delivery of armaments to Spain, may mean war or revolution in France", and he asked that an extraordinary Cabinet meeting should be summoned at four o'clock in the afternoon.

The position of the President of the Republic is shared by several Ministers; the Cabinet was divided in its views and the President of the Chamber, Herriot, has seen Blum and begged him to reflect, for he considers that this has never been done before, and that it may justify a *de facto* recognition by Germany and Italy of any semblance of government set up in a Spanish city and provide it with arms and ammunition in greater quantities than those France can supply. From half-past two until a quarter to four I have been with the Prime Minister and another Minister at the house of a third party; "my soul is torn", said Blum, who is as convinced as we ourselves are of the European significance of the struggle that is being fought in Spain. Never have I seen him so profoundly moved; "I shall maintain my position at all costs and in spite of all risks", he said; "we must help

Spain that is friendly to us. How? We shall see". . . .

The resolution of the Cabinet has been to avoid delivery from Government to Government, but to grant us the necessary permits so that private industry may deliver to us and circulate such material as we may purchase. The method of executing this and facilitating it will be decided by a Committee of Ministers, on which we have some of our most faithful friends; tomorrow they will hold their most important and decisive meeting, and they anticipate that it is almost absolutely certain that we shall be able to take the airplanes out of the country after the 25th on Monday or Tuesday, and we shall organize, or rather I shall organize, aided by Cruz Marin and some other Spanish as well as some excellent French friends, the safe passage of the bombs, a difficult matter, especially for one who, like myself, is not an astute fox, but we shall see what necessity makes one capable of. The Potez 54 machines will be constructed, and we shall endeavor to shorten the terms. As regards all the armaments I think we can only deal with Hotchkiss. . . .

Yours,
(signed) FERNANDO DE LOS RIOS.

But this was not all. Forced to acquiesce in murder in the streets of Madrid and Barcelona, in sacrilege all over Spain, forced to arm the mob with foreign aid, the Madrid Government, which was still in form a Government, and thus nominally representative of the parties of the moderate Left coalition which had won the elections, had to accept yet a third, and deeper, humiliation. It was forced to acquiesce in the naval mutiny, which was marked by the cold-blooded murder of about four-fifths of the officers of the fleet. Here, again, the mutiny was the work of an organized

minority, not of the seamen, who were loyal to their officers, but of the technical engine-room ratings, the wireless operators, and a number of the petty officers. Fortunately, or unfortunately, no Government, whatever its political opinion, can tolerate mutiny at sea and expect to profit by it. The revolutionary fleet has betrayed its own cause by cowardice, ill-discipline, and inefficiency to the point when today the national Government has undisputed command of the sea.

The six weeks from July 18th to the end of August saw the gathering of the armed forces of the nationalist Government. The forces in the south were stiffened by legionaries and a handful of Moorish troops, brought by aeroplanes from Morocco. In the north, where the Government established its headquarters first at Burgos and then at Salamanca, no help could be expected from Morocco till the army of the south was ready to take the field. The junction of the two armies was not, in fact, effected until much later. The northern army, under General Mola, was therefore at the start exclusively and necessarily recruited from the inhabitants of the towns and provinces, which accepted Burgos. So much for the pretense — again grossly dishonest — that the nationalist Government was no better than a sham façade concealing an army of mercenaries.

Power comes from above, never from below. All Governments, be they red, pink, or true blue, are by definition and of necessity minorities. They can exercise authority only if they are prepared to assert their authority over the general body of the citizens. The difference between the national Government in the territories which it controls today and the separate

revolutionary Governments of Bilbao, Valencia, and Catalonia is that the nationalist Government rules by consent of the ruled, while the revolutionary Governments rule, in so far as they do so, by force. This is a question, not of opinion, but of fact. Is there freedom of movement, of speech, and of trade? Are the shops and cafés open? In short, is life proceeding normally as far as the ordinary citizen is concerned? It is. "How many Reds are there here?" I asked the military governor of a big town, recently captured. He shrugged his shoulders. "About 15,000 possibly," he said. I was surprised and asked where they were. "In the streets, I imagine," he answered with a smile. "Do you place any restrictions on them?" Of course not, I was told, for the excellent reason that no one knew who was "Red" and who wasn't. "If you did know?" I asked, and again was told, quite accurately as I found out by asking the British Consul, that nothing would be done: the feeling against them was so overwhelming that no action was called for. Only those charged with crimes were arrested, and these were given, as I saw for myself at Malaga, a fair and public trial. Walking into the court, I was not even asked for a passport or pass. The room was full of prisoners and their friends and curious spectators, and in a corner one policeman who appeared to me to be asleep. The prisoners outnumbered the court and the police by twenty to one. The procedure followed closely that of an English court-martial, with a prosecutor and a prisoner's friend, but with one notable improvement, that the president of the court was a trained lawyer, as also were two of the other members of the court. If the prisoners were found guilty

– and this was the fate, I was told, of about one in three – the papers were forwarded, as in England, to the commander-in-chief for examination and confirmation or modification.

Prison conditions, as far as I was able to obtain the first-hand evidence of neutrals, are good. I myself saw only two groups of prisoners, the first Spanish, working in the roads, obviously well fed and clothed, and, as in the courtroom, outnumbering their guards by ten to one, and the other a group of English prisoners at Talavera. These men I spoke to, and they complained only of the absence of soap. They were otherwise content, and volunteered the information that they were well fed. They all told the same story in the same words to explain their presence there: they had come to look for work, and were now disillusioned. I did not get the impression that either part of the statement was even strictly accurate. The overwhelming majority of these men were militant Communists who had come to Spain to fight. If they were disillusioned it was not about their cause so much as about its Spanish supporters. But as to their being well cared for there was no doubt, and I got a very strong impression that as far as ordinary human relationships were concerned they much preferred their Spanish captors to their late comrades, and were genuinely surprised not so much at the treatment they were getting as at the fact that they had got back to the kind of life and the kind of people to whom they were accustomed in England.

For the administration of nationalist Spain is nothing if not democratic, using the term in its social sense. The atmosphere everywhere is that of the English

front line in the Great War, not of the headquarters or the base. At Salamanca, which is the seat not only of the high command but also of the Foreign Office and the heads of the civil administration, you meet in the Grand Hotel war correspondents, the highest military and civil authorities, hospital nurses, tourists, officers from the front, junior officers on the staffs, civil servants, civilians, and private soldiers of the volunteer forces. In four years of the Great War I never saw a war correspondent, and only once saw the Commander-in-Chief. In one day at Salamanca I saw lunching in the restaurant every important figure in the Government, in the high command, and in the forces and in the administration, as well as the staffs of the two accredited embassies and a number of prominent literary men into the bargain, and no formalities. I mention these impressions here because they surprised me a good deal. If the national Government errs, it errs on the side of informality, of clemency, and of casualness to friend and foe. Go where you like; say what you like. This attitude is born of an unshakeable conviction, which is certainly borne out by a mass of evidence, that all classes in Spain are wholly, solidly, behind the generalissimo. Seeing nationalist Spain, it is impossible not to fall a victim to the same conviction. No one asks who you are and what is your business. No one is inaccessible; no one has anything to conceal.

The creation in six months of the forms of ordered government and the reality of a free life is an astonishing achievement. The creation of an army of half a million, including supply and administrative services for three armies fighting on four fronts, is even

more astonishing. Only men up to twenty-six have so far been called up, and still vast reserves of manpower are available. That the army which is fighting this war is a Spanish army is unquestionable, but some estimates of the fighting strength which one hears are fantastic – notably the story of four Italian divisions on the Madrid front and of large German forces in the field elsewhere. There are no German fighting troops and never have been. There are a few Germans, in the technical services, behind the lines – mainly, I believe, in the depôt services and in the repair shops. There are also Italian volunteers – and a handful of Irish – in the Foreign Legion. There are also the Moors, whose numbers, again, are fantastically exaggerated. These last are, however, part of the Spanish regular army, and their presence excites no alarm. I saw a couple of hundred disembarking at Algeciras, and the women and children turned out to clap them as they walked through the streets smiling and singing. As with about everything else in Spain today, the truth about the Moors is precisely the opposite of what is stated. They are smiling, benign, and kindly, but not good shock troops. They regard the war as a holy war, and their discipline is excellent; but they are, so I was told, only good when fighting side by side with the Spanish Foreign Legion – which is the backbone of the national army.

The front runs from the coast east of Malaga to the frontier at Irun, with Madrid forming a deep but increasingly narrow re-entrant. To hold this front as the line was held in France in the Great War would need an army of two million men on each side, and even then there would be no margin for

effective concentration of a "mass of manoeuvres" behind the lines. The war in patches is surprisingly like the Western Front. The trenches I visited on the Madrid front had a familiar atmosphere, and the battalion commander in a ruined house just behind the lines, with his camp bed and his phonograph, his trench boots, and his last week's illustrated papers, might have stepped straight out of the cast of *Journey's End*. But precisely because there was trench warfare on this west front, an attack on Madrid from Talavera had to be abandoned – a sign of wisdom and strength not given to the British High Command till after three years of devastating slaughter. The Spanish war is a mountain war, fought, not by brigades and divisions, but by mixed columns of two to three thousand men. It is not a war of tanks or field artillery. It will be won by mechanized infantry, which means morale and organization fused to white heat at the strategic points, which, again, means leadership behind as well as in front. Both are there, but, fortunately for Spain, only on one side. The Red army is bottled in Madrid. It may, assisted by the weather, survive this attack; it may survive the next: but it cannot now break out – except to commit suicide in the open. Why did the Reds hold Madrid? There lies the clue to the Spanish Civil War. If there were a Red Spain they would have abandoned Madrid long ago; but there is no Red Spain. There is only the Basque separatist movement, in uneasy alliance with the Communist miners of Oviedo (with some support from Labor elements in Bilbao and Santander), the Catalan separatist movement, in even more uneasy alliance with the Anarchist Party which

dominates Barcelona, and the armed mob of Madrid, now called the Government militia. The International Brigade is a formidable fighting force, but it is not strong enough to take the initiative, because it has no supply or administrative services behind it and no friends waiting deliverance in front of it.

The Red strategy, given a Red Spain, was obvious. They should have aimed at breaking the link between Franco's northern and southern armies and rolling up the flank of the northern army till it was thrown back on their own northern revolutionary force at Bilbao. But such a movement demands a friendly population or an overwhelming force to protect communications. The Reds have neither. If nationalist Spain were not unquestionably and pretty well unanimously behind General Franco, it would be impossible for him to find, from a bare 500,000 men under arms, fighting troops to conduct offensives on four disconnected fronts — at Oviedo, north and south of Madrid, and in the south. The essential communications of these four forces cover an aggregate of thousands of miles. They are wholly unprotected, except by the normal peace-time establishment of civil guards and, in Seville and other large towns, of the municipal police. I except the traffic-control posts, manned by elderly volunteers and wearing in the Basque country the scarlet beret of the Requetes, and in the rest of Spain the blue forage cap, with red piping, of the Spanish Phalanx. I except them, because these are not military detachments, but the objective sign, ever present, of the spontaneous loyalty and enthusiasm of the villagers and townsmen to the new régime.

There are, incorporated in the army, in military formations, under army officers probably 50,000 Requetes and 100,000 Phalangists. In the whole of Spain the total of these volunteer organizations is immensely greater, probably three times as great. Here is the new Spain. But we must not set down the regular army as being, in contradistinction, the old Spain. The regular army is no more the old army than was the British Army of 1916 the same that fought at Mons. The army in Spain today is non-political. In the old Spain the army was forced into politics by the apathy or corruption of the political classes, by landlord absenteeism, by the lack of leadership from the Church. Today all this is changed. The new Spain is intensely political, and the army need no longer charge itself, and has no intention of charging itself, with political problems. The Phalanx and the Requetes will look after these. A vigorous social policy is the demand of the young men and women, who have turned their backs on the old Spain forever. The separation of Church and State and the break-up of the big estates, the restoration of agriculture and the improvement of working conditions, and the legal limitation of profits are articles of faith to the Spanish Phalanx. It is rigidly and even bitterly contra-capitalist. The Barcelona merchants will get as short shrift as the Barcelona Communists, and the great landlords will get even less. In Seville at least one industry is already reorganized on corporate lines, but the key to Spanish reconstruction is land settlement and village reconstruction and a vigorous educational policy. These things are talked of everywhere.

The old politicians are no doubt waiting across the frontiers, but they will get a cool reception when they return. They will be needed in administrative tasks, but they will not direct Spanish policy. General Franco is neither a Hitler nor a Mussolini. He is a Spanish Catholic edition of our most un-English hero, General Gordon. He has glitter but no swagger. He is an ardent Christian, and he is fighting for social justice. When he spoke to me of the atrocities committed he spoke, not as a politician denouncing other politicians, but as a man of profound and simple faith facing incalculable evil. "I ask nothing of England," he said with emphasis. "I only want England to understand us." I had seen him ten days before at a splendid ceremony where, a glittering figure surrounded by his generals, he had received the Italian Ambassador. The sun was streaming in through the window from the great square at Salamanca where there was a brilliant parade of banners borne by representative detachments of all the volunteer associations and in the background a squadron of Moorish cavalry in full ceremonial order, but it was the light shining through from within which dazzled. Now in his own room, surrounded by maps (which were, I noticed, torn from Michelin guides – how Spanish!) the glitter was laid aside, but the serene certitude remained – certitude of the ultimate simple human values of which he was for the time the custodian. Surely we could understand!

I asked a Phalangist friend what his party were doing in the way of political action. "We are feeding the children of the poor in our big cities," was the answer. Such is the spirit of the new Spain of

which the generalissimo is the servant as well as the master. I saw these children's restaurants – two rooms to each, with fifty tables each seating four infants, and each table with a toy on it. Elephants seemed the most popular. There were four of these restaurants in Salamanca – each gives 800 meals a day. There was as many, or perhaps more, in Seville. They are being started in Malaga. "Are you going on with them afterwards?" I asked. "Till we have made them unnecessary," my friend answered.

There will, said General Franco in his famous speech of October 1st, be no room for parasites in the new Spain. The State will not be a "confessional" State, but will regulate its relations with the Church, defining their respective spheres of influence. The workers will be given an absolute guarantee against capitalist exploitation. But, above all, it is the rebirth of the Spanish soul that is desired. The teachings of false prophets, which have, in the words of the generalissimo, accomplished "the moral assassination of a people", must be challenged by positive doctrines of social justice based on the unchanging principles of Christian morality.

How comes it that no hint of the real character of the Spanish national movement, of the real character of its leaders, and of the nature and intensity of the popular support which it enjoys, has reached this country? The answer to this question is all too easy. We in England have been deliberately misled because we have not realized that propaganda is not merely a subsidiary weapon of the Valencia Government, but its only weapon. There is no Valencia Government. There is a Red Spanish army; there is no Red

Spain; there is only Red propaganda. And it is believed all over the world, and even in Spain. I have seen the battlefields before Madrid. I have seen the roads over which Queipo de Llano's columns marched on Malaga. The battles have not been fought there, but on the radio and in the Press. The brutal Moors slaughtering children and raping women are not figments of a harassed imagination inflamed by defeat in desperate engagements. They are a fiction deliberately created to alarm the simple villagers, the majority of whom had never seen Moorish troops before. The immense foreign forces which General Franco is alleged to control are an equally essential instrument of the Red campaign. What will these foreign mercenaries not do when they pour in their tens of thousands into the captured towns? Malaga is a city of 200,000 inhabitants. Ten thousand determined men could have held the passes and the coast road for six months against Queipo de Llano's columns. They preferred to retire with their loot. On the coast road there are sixty bridges and culverts in what was undisputed Red territory until eight weeks ago. Not a single one of the bridges was blown up. They could all have been destroyed at leisure and in perfect safety. They were not destroyed because the Red Junta at Malaga never intended to fight, any more than the so-called Government of Valencia intends to govern. They intended others to fight. Their weapon was, and still is, propaganda.

The Italians took Malaga! The Reds do not believe it. The people in Malaga know it to be untrue. The British Consul at Malaga knows it to be untrue. But it leaves in the world the belief that there is

"something in it". Franco has no men; or if he has, they will not fight. If Spain were left to herself, people begin to feel, this war would be over. What we in England do not understand is that the Red propaganda is not, like ours in the last war, a political exaggeration or a merely favorable presentation of facts, but the deliberate circulation of lies. Heavy fighting is reported at Toledo on the British wireless on the day, as it happens, that I was at Toledo. There was not, and has not been for months, a shot fired. But the battle was an important one, none the less. The issue is still in doubt. The Foreign Offices of the world hold their hands. Journalists all over the world tone down their prophecies. The suspense, which may still lead to intervention, goes on. It was the same with atrocities. It is not true that there have been fewer atrocities on one side than the other. There have been no atrocities on the Nationalist side. A cynic might explain this by saying, with perfect truth, that there was no need for them. Why, after all, massacre your friends and lay waste the villages you have to occupy? The stories are fantastic on the face of them, once the facts are known. But the facts were not known for months. For months the English people still thought of a small mercenary army fighting its way across unfriendly territory, and so they believed the massacre of Badajoz, and the massacre of Seville; and now comes the crowning absurdity of all — the massacre at Malaga! "Why in God's name," a British resident asked me, "are these lies reported in the English Press?" and went on to explain that we had lost trade which we should never recover in fifty years through our credulity. We are

no longer respected in Spain because we have shown ourselves in a crisis supremely unintelligent. After all, we ought in Spain, of all countries, to be guarded in our gestures of moral superiority, because the only real massacre which ever took place at Badajoz was by British troops.

The accusation of unintelligence, put to me with courteous and comprehending charity by General Franco, and more brusquely by my own fellow countryman in Malaga, is justified up to the hilt. The Communist policy of revolution demands the "liquidation" of the priesthood and the bourgeoisie. There is no concealment about this. It has been already systematically begun in Spain. Over 4,000 priests have been murdered in cold blood. The very signal for the outbreak was the murder of the most distinguished and high-principled politician in Spain. In Malaga, where the nature and extent of the outrages can be seen by any tourist, there was no mob violence. The houses burnt and looted were, however, carefully chosen – they were the houses of men prominent in the public life of the town, of industrialists, lawyers, and politicians of the Right. The destruction, murder, and thieving were done in cold blood, with the full knowledge and consent of the leaders of the revolution, while the police were kept in their barracks. How many thousand people were murdered in the following months will probably never be known. One thing is certain that in Malaga, as in Madrid, there were no trials. The same was, and still is, true of Barcelona. These things have not been done in secret, but before the eyes of the world. In any town in Spain you can meet eye-witnesses and

refugees from these cities, the fortunate few who escaped through the kindness of some foreign Power, but seldom through the British and never through the French Embassy. The British Fleet took off many refugees from Malaga and other seaports, but confined its aid to those legally entitled to it. You cannot fight murder with red tape.

We are regarded in Spain as having acquiesced in murder and even paid court to it. The accusation is unfair but inevitable, and we shall pay dearly for our persistent and unwarranted refusal to listen to the advice of, and to give a free hand to, the men on the spot. The opinion of these men is well known to all who care to inquire. It is sufficient to say categorically that it is not the opinion which the British Foreign Office desire to hear. We prefer to make the elementary error of mistaking the policy of the Leonine Encyclicals for Fascism, to give credence to the palpably absurd picture of the conflict as one between militarism and democracy, with errors on both sides. We do this because we fear the new Spain. We want a weak Spain, allied to France and Russia as a make-weight for our loss of prestige in the Mediterranean and to provide harbors for our Fleet. That, as every politician in this country knows, is the truth. We are being not only wicked but foolish. There is no Red Spain. There will be no harbors for the allies of Moscow in the Mediterranean, and there will be no Englishmen willing to fight the battle of Moscow over the ruins of Christendom. The Spaniards know this. For that reason they do not fear us.

That absence of fear is a grave matter for us. The need for enlightening British opinion is not one which

Catholic Spain places at all high on the list of her necessities. The only direct plea made to me while I was in Spain was by General Queipo de Llano. "We only ask one thing of England: we ask her to insist on the real enforcement of the Non-Intervention Agreement. But, I suppose," he added, "that things will go on just the same as before." I also suppose so. The Foreign Office at Salamanca receives reports every day of the numbers of men and munitions leaving the French frontier. To date the men have gone across openly by day and the munitions by night. Now the volunteers, they say, are to be supplied with Spanish passports granted in Bordeaux. The first order was for 10,000 passports. Without a doubt, the number of foreigners under arms at Madrid is exaggerated, but these foreigners are required, not primarily as soldiers, but, as always, for propaganda. They are intended, above all, to create and maintain an "international question", which may lead to the desired international intervention. The whole policy of the Red Junta is directed to this: to keep up the fiction of a Red Spain fighting desperately with the good will of Europe against an arbitrary military revolt financed and equipped by ambitious Fascist leaders.

That this fiction is still believed is, in part, the fault of the Salamanca Government, who affect an indifference to world opinions, which it is unwise to affect even if you honestly feel it. They give a generous welcome to their friends and place an almost Quixotic reliance in their loyalty and discretion. But they make too little effort to convince their enemies. They do not even reply to the ceaseless Red propa-

ganda. The "massacre" at Badajoz I knew to be a lie, because it was announced in the French Press of the Left two days before Badajoz fell, but it was never contradicted except by Francis McCullagh, who was there at the time and whose evidence on the point is conclusive. Reading every day of entirely fictitious air raids and battles, the staffs at Salamanca turn to the Red propaganda for comic relief and seem unable to realize that decent and Christian people living thousands of miles away honestly believe a lot of it. Even their communiqué is issued two hours after the Madrid communiqué and is too late for comment in the English and French morning papers, while the correspondents' messages arrive in time for the evening papers when they are no longer news. The Government takes the trouble to broadcast in English every night from Salamanca, but they broadcast the previous day's news. The effect of all this is that every morning in England we read of some development unfavorable to the national cause; and when the Salamanca communiqué comes through, we are left with the impression of the war as a continual see-saw — first the success for one side, then for the other; an attack here, there a counter-attack: at the best, a ding-dong struggle. And so it is, in the Press — which is where this war is being fought.

I do not mean that there has been no hard fighting — still less that there are no convinced Communists. Almost every village in Spain bears witness to malign sincerity of these convictions. As to fighting, there was hand-to-hand fighting for a short time at Talavera, and for many days at Toledo. There was a stubborn resistance at Madrid, and the battles on the

Jarama and on the road to Guadalajara have been bitter and costly. But these battles have been purely defensive — a touch of bloody reality interjected into the long war of propaganda. Oviedo alone is different. There is the only Red Spain; the mining population there have nothing in common with the Basques except courage. They are, however, badly led and are fighting a lone and hopeless battle, like our own miners after the collapse of the General Strike in 1926.

The game at Madrid is nearly up. The international brigades and one or two of their hardened militia battalions can fight action after action, but, like Joe Johnston facing Sherman in Georgia, they must always retreat in the end, and the end must be surrender unless they can escape through the bottle neck and fall back on Valencia. Given good weather we should see the answer to this dilemma in April. For the rest, you have only to see Spain today to remember Napoleon's maxim: an army fights on its stomach. There is abundance of food and abundance of men in nationalist Spain, and the cadres are there to assimilate them and the lorries to transport them. In Red territory the food shortage is severe and must in the end be decisive, and in this matter the Reds are the victims of their own cowardly weapons.

Instead of setting out to fight and conquer, they set out to terrorize and demoralize by spreading panic. The greatest tragedy of the civil war is the fate of the frightened and mainly innocent victims of the Red propaganda who fled from the villages into the "Red" towns on the approach of the national troops. The numbers from each village, judging by

their present populations, were not great, but there were some from every village, and the aggregate must be considerable. They were told, of course, that they would be shot if they stayed: now they have to be fed by the Reds and also housed, and the task is wholly beyond the administrative ability of the desperadoes usually in charge. In Malaga Cathedral alone were 10,000 of these unfortunate people, living in conditions so indescribable that passers-by turned back rather than approach too close to the cathedral walls. They died six or seven a day of every kind of disease, and when Queipo de Llano's army marched in, the first thing the civil governor had to do was to build a carriageway up to the cathedral door so that the municipal water-carts could be driven in to clean out the interior with disinfectants.

But the Reds, victims though they are of their own lies, have not lost faith in them, for on returning to France a few days ago the first paper I picked up contained, in addition to figures of the Malaga "massacre" – which had amounted by then to 10,000 men, women, and children slaughtered in the public square – particulars of the threats of the national Government to shoot all prisoners of foreign nationality who might surrender to them in the field. The same paper gave detailed accounts of 70,000 Italian troops in action on the Guadarrama front. This absurdity served, of course, a double purpose – to emphasize the need for the continuance of French intervention, and to exaggerate by a hundredfold the magnitude of their own army, which must, if the facts were true, be withstanding on one small section alone an attack as heavy as that of the British Army on the

Somme. That some of the Italian volunteers are in action on this front I imagine to be true, but they certainly represent no more than a fraction of the not very considerable Spanish army under exclusively Spanish direction which is surrounding Madrid. If we put the total of the volunteers in the line at 9,000, we shall almost certainly put it too high.

English representatives on the spot or familiar with the conditions are unanimously in favor of recognizing the Spanish Government at Salamanca. Only in this way can we hope to regain and keep the sincere friendship of the Spanish people who in the new Spain are going to regulate their own affairs and determine their own foreign policy. Our recognition of the national Government will end the war, for it will totally destroy the world's confidence in the Red propaganda, which is the key to the whole of the strategy of Valencia. As long as Western Europe and the United States appear to accept the position that the fight is one between democracy and military despotism, so long does the hope of effective intervention exist, so long will the Communist Government be able to buy supplies abroad, and so long will they be actively supported by the armed forces and the money of the international revolution. If I were a revolutionary I should act as Russia is acting and as the French Left are acting. The stake is worth playing for, but the game ceases to be worth the candle the moment the facts are known to the liberal democracies of Great Britain and the United States and to the Center parties in France. Make no mistake: the Valencia Government does not expect all its lies to be believed. It is perfectly satisfied when it creates

the state of muddled indifference which is crippling our influence in world politics today. So long as we are in that state, we are morally disarmed, and that, above all, is the purpose of the propaganda. Every time an Englishman, idiotically affecting shrewdness, announces that he "does not suppose there is much to choose between the two sides", he is saying just exactly what the Communists mean him to say.

What of British interests? As for the last hundred years, the greatest of British interests is peace. There will be no peace until we have rebuilt or destroyed the Geneva system. As long as that system requires us to recognize the Valencia Government and refuses us the right to recognize the *de facto* Government of a Christian people who are fighting for their existence, so long will the world be divided into those Powers who find such a system good and those who find it inherently evil. Those who find it evil must set about the building of the new and barbaric economic frontiers which are the necessary consequence of being at enmity with Geneva, and if the building and maintenance of the frontiers are to be regarded as an unfriendly act, then war is inevitable unless the League amends its principles and practices. We know this, but when we still plead for public order based on the League, we forget that the first direct consequences of the resurgence of Spain will be that the League's weapon, for which we have sacrificed our friends, our dignity, our security, and our ease, will break in our hands. The great South American republics will not tolerate the League unless and until it recognizes the national Government of Spain. If we wish to save the League we can in fact no longer

save it on our own terms. The recognition of the Salamanca Government, *de facto*, is the necessary first step to any effective revival of the League. As an instrument of purely secular policies based on purely legalistic grounds, the League is dead. If it is to be revived it must be as an instrument of peace among men of good will and must be based on order and prosperity, not on the defense, on technical grounds, of pillage, murder, and sacrilege.

Southern America will have the League on no other terms. Today the situation as it appeared a hundred years ago to Canning is reversed. It is General Franco's Spain, not the British Foreign Office, who will call in the new world to redress, if need be, the balance of the old.

If democracies are incapable of disinterested sacrifice, then they have no call to attempt the government of men. Have we in fact sunk so low in the scale of human values that we can no longer simply and honorably express our love of right and our hate of wrong without a thought of the consequence? Or are we so sunk in unintelligence that the difference between right and wrong is a refinement beyond our understanding? Every Englishman who feels in doubt on this issue has the personal obligation as a citizen of a democracy to go out and ascertain the facts. Men are fighting, and dying, in Spain for every decency of civilization which Englishmen regard as their birthright – for personal freedom, for security, for the rights of conscience, for justice, and for morality. They are working back, not to the evils of Victorian finance-capitalism, but forward to a Christian social order based on human rights. It is a Euro-

pean issue. We have nothing to teach Spain in this matter. We have not a little to learn.

Spain is of all countries in Europe the most individualistic and the most proud. This pride is not without austerity, because it is of the soil. Spain is not industrial. To imagine anything comparable to the German or Italian régime operating in Spain is pure fantasy. The Spanish Phalanx is a body without leaders, without funds, and without discipline. It is the spontaneous reply of a nation of freemen to a handful of tyrants. Even more austere and even more individualistic are the Requetes, whose motto "God, King, and Country" embodies the simple principles of their creed. These are not political parties offering bribes or even reforms. They are two-thirds of a nation speaking for itself above the smoke of battle. "Over the carnage rose prophetic a voice." Spain is not in ruins. Wanton destruction has been done, and much life lost. No one yet knows the full tale. Probably it will never be known. But Spain is the land of children, and her fertile acres will sustain a new and better generation, which will make its voice heard in the councils of Europe more certainly than some who today talk with louder emphasis.

The impression the traveller receives is not of a people awakening from a nightmare, but of a people on the march to a new adventure. The march will be long. It will only begin in earnest with the victory, but it will go on. The first thing I saw in Spain were the ruins of the main street of Irun dynamited by hooligans in the name of progress. There was only one house standing, and it was used as the office of the military governor, who had organized a reception

for us. But my eye rested, not on the welcome prepared for us, but on the governor's desk bare of an ornament except for a crucifix, and so, facing the crucified Christ, I drank to the Spanish resurrection. And our Spanish hosts drank, not to England which had asked no questions, but to us who had come to ask them. We were not famous. We were not influential, but we had come to see for ourselves. That is all that Spain asks. "*Je désire seulement que l'Angleterre nous comprend.*" That is my other most abiding memory – that simple and charitable plea from a Christian soldier who has shouldered a burden of responsibility as great as that of any man in Europe and who asks only that we shall try to understand.

More's Christology

G. R. Elliott

Author's Note.—This is the second part of an essay on "Mr. More and the Gentle Reader". The first part, which appeared in *The Bookman* (predecessor of The American Review), April, 1929, is of a general and commendatory nature. In the present paper exception is taken to a particular feature of More's thought.

High and permanent pleasure. That phrase from one of More's essays came to my mind when, after his death, I began sadly to reread his letters to me. The sadness retired before the living vigor and clear beauty of his penned words. Some day, I hope, his complete correspondence will be collected and published. He was a voluminous and distinguished letter-writer, unlike his friend Irving Babbitt, who was a distinguished and voluminous talker. Babbitt left with me a pile, a volcanic pile, of conversational memories, but only a few dozen words set down with pen and ink. More wrote me a considerable pile of letters, but my personal recollections of him are scant and rather pale. To be sure my meetings with him were few and far between. But in his letters I find his ideas far more pungently expressed than in his conversation. He was first and last a writer. The "Hermit of Princeton", as he was dubbed, confided to friends that the moment of most intense delight in his daily life was the early-morning moment when he lifted his pen from his desk. He was not afflicted with writers' cramp; the mental kind, I mean. When

he took pen in hand he did not gnaw the hither end of it, wondering what he was going to write. He knew just what he wanted to say and, in a rare degree, just how he was going to say it. In his letters as in his essays he conveys the feeling that was his when he was writing them, a feeling of "high and permanent pleasure".

Not that he was unsociable; quite the contrary. Like Babbitt he was a very companionable person; but with a marked difference. The "Warring Buddha of Harvard", if one may so call Babbitt, regarded writing as mainly a duty. Comparatively speaking it was a hard and wearing task for him. If one called attention to an obscure or jerky passage in a new essay of his, he would say: "Well, now, I tried very hard to make that clear; I thought it would read right along." My impression was that when he came out from his study after a bout of composition, he emerged into a larger freedom, the freedom of bouts of argument; bringing out high thoughts with which to assail his company. Not so the "Hermit of Princeton". In his study, alone with his pen, he had said his highest and completest say. In company he was very much the pleasant man of the world; carefully attired, physically and mentally; lending an ear to gossip, recounting in his turn amusing anecdotes; witty, urbane, and even suave. He seemed at times anxious to display to his listeners a genial indulgence that he denied to his readers. He covered his severe philosophy with a conversational lid. This, now and then, would lift a little to let out an acid phrase, accompanied by a half-sardonic smile; but quickly the lid went down again and the smile smoothed-up its

corners. Just because he was so much a hermit of the study he wished not to be alone when he was in company.

However, it is well known that with a single friend or in a select group More could doff his urbane manner and let out his inmost thoughts. Persons who, unlike me, were with him frequently should have much to record of him in this vein. Such records together with his letters are of special value in view of More's extraordinary personal reticence in his essays. . . . I have one recollection that I wish to set down here. When *en route* to a lecture engagement he spent several hours alone with me in my study. At that time he had entered upon his theological phase. I had written him a critical letter; and he was warm with his new convictions; and the weather was provokingly hot. He accepted a glass of cold milk, nothing else; and somewhat to my surprise he took off his coat and rolled up his white shirtsleeves. "Now," he said grimsmilingly, with a light flourish of his right arm, as though wielding a rapier – instead of Babbitt's broadsword – "now you will please to tell me plainly your religious beliefs and I shall then inform you just what sort of heretic you are!"

I told, or tried to tell, and he proceeded to pierce me through and through, sipping his milk the while. I could not well parry his swift logic nor hold my ground against his amazing knowledge of the history of theology, orthodox and unorthodox. He so fascinated me that I forgot the heat. But now I have also forgotten "just what sort of heretic" I was. In fact, it seems that I was several sorts all mixed up together. At first he set me down as an out-and-out Arian, but

I protested firmly and he partly allowed my protest. On one point, at least, we were entirely agreed: namely, that Arianism, if it is thought through to its proper conclusion, means that there can be nothing eternal, nothing without beginning or end, in the human spirit.

More's final position in respect to Christian theology is most tellingly given, I think, in the small book, *The Sceptical Approach to Religion* (Princeton Press, 1934), designed to summarize and simplify the argument developed in the six volumes of *The Greek Tradition.* But the uninitiated reader would perhaps do well to begin with the last chapter, the beautiful and moving essay on "The Gift of Hope", where the author, as a rule so shy of speaking autobiographically, comes very near to doing so. . . . I confess that I approach this whole matter very gingerly, recalling Spenser's verse regarding the New Jerusalem, "Too high a ditty for my simple song". A full and careful study of More's theology has been provided by Professor Robert Shafer in his book *Paul Elmer More and American Criticism* (Yale University Press). I have to offer a few remarks from a somewhat different point of view. I cannot share Professor Shafer's regret that More finally leaves his readers, after a fashion, in the lurch by intimating that he has tried to give them an objective account of Christian doctrine rather than of what he is sure that he himself believes. This seems to me a fine return of More upon himself, a crowning evidence of the unremitting veracity and humility of his spirit.

The truth is that from first to last he was in the main a Platonist, by constitution and by reason of

the studies that occupied the greater part of his life. But in advanced middle age he saw very clearly that Platonism at its best (that is, as he knew it and lived by it) is a preparation for Christianity. Therefore he set himself – rather with head than with heart, I think, though by no means without heart – to show how Plato's doctrines found their completion eight centuries later in the dogmas of the Christian Catholic Church, especially in the pronouncements of the Council of Chalcedon. He confessed to friends that early in life he had found himself confronted by a sharp dilemma: Christ must be either a madman or a god. (This dilemma is a normal one for the academic reason.) And now he decided that Christ must be God; that otherwise there was no reality in Plato's difficult doctrine of Ideas, wherein there is assumed an inexplicable union of the divine and the human; a union unbelievable if it could never be historic and personal and complete.

So far, so good. But it is one thing to believe that Jesus Christ is both God and man in a unique sense; quite another thing to believe that this unique sense can be defined with anything like adequacy by the human reason, or that the reason's efforts in this direction are of anything like prime importance. We cannot even be sure, without presumption, that the word "Incarnation" itself is a permanent fixture. It is impregnated with the implications of the Latinistic stage of Occidental civilization; and in some future religious era there may become current a more suitable term to denote the supreme historical fact that occasioned the dogma. Christology is not an exact science; and at present, like the science of the atom,

it is in a marked state of transition. A number of contemporary and authoritative religious thinkers have adopted in this field a far more tentative tone than More's. Search, for instance, the writing of Von Hügel and A. E. Taylor, or even the more decisive utterances of William Temple (Archbishop of York), noting what they say, or refrain from saying, on the subject of Christology; then place your findings alongside the definitions given by More. The difference is very significant. I recall a passage in which the late Baron Von Hügel, that great Roman Catholic saint of the intellect, remarks that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ "is in *some* sense unique" (italics mine). But More set himself to define that sense as precisely as he could.

In *The Sceptical Approach* (page 163 ff.) he says that in Christ divine revelation is of a "a new *form* . . . unique in *kind* as well as in degree" (italics mine). All previous prophets and teachers, though they prepared the way for Christ, must be placed in an essentially different category. As for ordinary religious persons: "We may speak of being in God, but it is only by a loose and rather dangerous metaphor that we may speak of God being in us. Man's reason and conscience may be divine, they are not the indwelling of divinity." In fact, the scale of divine revelation "is not *continuous* but interrupted at least at three points in the ascending passage from inanimate to animate, from animal to man, and from the dualism of man to the dualism of the God-man". This comes perilously near to claiming that, by constitution, Jesus is as different from man as man is from the animals.

But More, shrinking back (I think) from that gulf, hastens to assure us that our human faith in divine revelation is, unlike that revelation itself, entirely "*continuous*", envincing "no break, no distinction in kind". For if such were not the case (though More does not state this point) Jesus Christ's faith in God would be of a different *kind* from other men's faith in God; which would be an inhuman paradox. So, according to More, our faith in the Divine Being, whether He is revealed through Jesus or through other men, is a single kind of faith – though the revelation through Jesus is different in kind from the relevation through other men! Here is an intolerable dichotomy of revelation and faith. Later (page 178) More says that "Christianity alone of religions corresponds with the final data of self-knowledge". But surely our final datum is the indwellingness of the divine will of transcendent deity; and our knowledge of that, if we follow out More's logic, must be different in *kind* from Christ's knowledge of it. Thus we come to the gulf that More would fain avoid: the inmost experience of the knowing, praying, believing, loving, and serving Jesus of Nazareth is different from ours in *kind*. If so, we cannot really take part in his experience.

The gentle reader may justifiably exclaim, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave when the warp of our Christological pattern is the word *kind*!" Would not the words "quality" and "possession" be somewhat less objectionable? Consider what happens when a great poet expresses an old human emotion or idea with perfect originality, with original perfection. "The quality of mercy is not strained". . . . Or, "Tomor-

row and tomorrow and tomorrow". . . . Those two experiences are as old as the human race. But Shakespeare, for the moment entirely possessed by them, is possessed also of the perfect words and tune of them. His experience is the same kind as ours but supreme in poetic quality and possession. . . . In Christ men find the same kind of life or being as their own; otherwise they could not really know it or share it. But in Him it has unique perfection of quality: his will is completely possessed by and of the Divine Will. And this complete possession is sublimely, divinely, different from the incomplete possession that we find in other persons, no matter of how high a quality their lives and thoughts may be; for instance, the Buddha. We say, with a certain rightness, of a supreme passage of verse, "This is infinitely better than any other passage on the same subject." And when we compare the most Christ-like life that we know with the Life of Christ, we say with entire rightness, "This is infinitely better." Here indeed the light that lighteth every man, the Word that creates all things, becomes flesh and dwells among us (and we behold his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth. . . . One is driven to quote St. John because one's own words are so weak and fumbling. My point is that the words "quality" and "possession" are somewhat less objectionable than the word "kind" as employed by More. They seem to me closer to the sense of the New Testament, and to the trend of the most authoritative Christological thinking of the present time in so far as I have studied it. More's system, I am sure, is not highly authoritative. And if, as Professor Shafer complains, More himself does not en-

tirely believe it, so much the better. For I must say, in the upshot, it is unbelievable.

Also I think that More's Christological system weakens the force of his earlier dualistic philosophy, considered in the first part of this essay. As Christologist he urges that the duality of the nature of Jesus is "*analogous* [my italics] to the duality of the supernatural and the natural in man, but it is different also [the context shows that he means different in kind] in being the duality of divinity and humanity". This thought, as More develops it, seems to me to mean that, except in the case of Christ, there is no *real* reality, so to speak, in the commingling of the divine and human in human life. When, for instance, Sir Philip Sidney prays, "Eternal Life, maintain thy life in me", the words "thy life" do not or should not really mean that. They do not even mean "a life which is an image of thy life"; for an image may really partake of that which it images. The right meaning according to More's logic must be "a life which is *analogous* to thy life". And therefore that "true universal in human nature" which More as Platonist used to exalt, is not truly universal: it is merely an analogue of the Universal Life. There can be no essential correspondence between two things that are merely analogous. . . . Here again poetry can help us. In Shakespeare's time the Roman Catholic martyr, Robert Southwell, wrote:

> *Man's soul of endless beauty image is,*
> *Drawn by the work of endless skill and might. . . .*

Southwell knew that the Universal Artist puts himself really, though inexplicably, into the image that he creates.

The truth is that the main significance of More's Christian thought lies in its strong reaction against that religionistic humanitarianism which, enthroning nature in place of God, reduces Christ to "a mere man", as the phrase goes. At the same time (this point will be developed in a later paper) he was reacting from the non-theological humanism of Irving Babbitt, to which More's own outlook had formerly approximated but which, he now believed, could provide no ultimate defense against humanitarian assaults. Those two reactions drove him into a kind of Christological absolutism – despite his brilliant and effectual denunciations of the "Demon of the Absolute" in other fields of thought.

Milton, I believe, had continually to fight the devil of pride in his own breast and was therefore able in his chief poem to make the character of Satan extraordinarily vivid and appealing. Similarly More could powerfully sketch and confute the Demon of the Absolute because this very creature was always trying to ensnare him. Witness his relentless criticism of the Absolute in German philosophy and of the absolutist tendency which he found in Roman Catholic theology; both are dealt with in his penetrating essay on Von Hügel in the final volume of the Shelburne Essays, *On Being Human*. More could not believe in a God whose will is absolutely law. "I must attribute the evil of the world," he says, "to some other obscurely guessed factor that thwarts the full working of His will. . . . There is something in the sum of existence besides the will of God, and beyond that fact I deem it folly to conjecture" (*Sceptical Approach*, pages 163-4). This utterance, whether or no it be theologi-

cally correct, is humanly appealing; and it stands in remarkable contrast to his reasonings about Christ. Those reasonings are not supported, I believe, by the synoptic gospels; therefore More terms these, in a misfortunate passage, "the humanitarian gospels". That adjective, when we consider the connotations given to it by More's total work, simply will not do; it does not apply to those three sublimely human versions of the life of Christ. Here More's thought is gored by the horn of the Demon of the Absolute. In short, my impression is that, over against the age-old absolutism of metaphysics, More's thinking tends to humanize the idea of God; but that, because of his extreme though valuable reaction against the new humanitarianism, his logic tends to de-humanize Christ.

However, when a person remarked to me recently that More's books "smell of the lamp", I exclaimed, "But what a lamp!" A clear and steady light, continually noble, pervades the reaches of his immense scholarship. And it is always a challenging and educative light. The reader may often differ from the author's ideas but not, unless he is a far too gentle reader, without a real effort to clarify his own. At the same time the reader may feel that More's ideas upon the highest matters suffer from a certain deficiency of the poetic spirit. This spirit by itself cannot give us the highest truth, but without it the highest truth is not given. More lacks the *lumination* of an Emerson; whom, as he liked to say, he adored this side idolatry. Let us then place More in our bookcase a little lower than that angel; but not too far away. He is the necessary complement and corrective to Emerson. The light of that great but confused sage has burned muddily in

a thousand subsequent writers. More brought to the scene the cleansing light of a great critical intellect. . . . Emerson sometimes gives us the impression that he had a feeling that, in his own light, he had caught up with Jesus. More, after long and severe searchings for high truth, placed his lamp, in his own way, at the feet of the glory of Christ.

Two Texts

Hilaire Belloc

I have come across two announcements during the last week upon which I feel moved to write, for they are closely allied in spirit and both (in my judgement) heretical – and therefore calculated to do harm to the social philosophy which I have most at heart. The first I found in an article which appeared in The American Review from the pen of the late Mr. Penty.* The second I read under I know not what authorship in a general article which appeared in one of the American papers a few weeks ago.

The first pronouncement was to the effect that we could hardly restore economic freedom and re-establish private property, which is the sole guarantee of economic freedom, in the modern world unless we got rid of machinery; or at any rate modified the present wide use of machinery. The second pronouncement, briefer and of much narrower scope, was a protest against the resistance offered (by those who seek the restoration of economic freedom) to the power of modern capitalist organization – individual capitalist controllers, whether as managers or controllers, or millionaire owners of stock. The writer said that instead of criticizing and opposing concentrated capitalist control of production we should do better to fix our attention upon good wages, secure

* "The Restoration of Property" by A. J. Penty, The American Review, February, 1937.

employment, and so forth, "*leaving the management of capital to those who handle it best*".

I will take the second and least important of these two judgements first. It is a very general attitude of mind even among those who desire a return to sane living. It is universal in the mass of industrialized men, outside the comparatively small group of reformers.

It takes all sorts of forms; among others the form of presupposing that the man who has made a large fortune by handling large concentrations of capital in a particular fashion is to be admired as the superior of his fellows; as a man endowed with special gifts like those of the great artist or the great poet or the great strategist.

Another form it takes is part of the presupposition that high concentration of capital is inevitable nowadays. Since it is inevitable, since there must be a huge mechanism to be dealt with, we had better leave the handling of it to the few special men whose minds correspond to such a task.

Another form it takes is using the words "success" or "failure" in connection with human enterprise as though they were equivalent to the success or failure of the accumulation of wealth in a single hand, by which criterion no saint or poet or mother of a family would be successful in his or her own function – for this use of "success" and "failure" virtually presupposes that there is *no function worthy of special attention* save the accumulation of wealth. Another form it takes is pointing out that the handling of very large concentrations of capital has created a technique of its own, and that an attempt to handle capital in any

other fashion is not only fatal but certain to be destroyed by competition.

Now the whole of this talk shows ignorance of three main things: first, of man's own inner nature; secondly, of history; and thirdly, of the society about us. We all know by looking within ourselves that a man possesses this or that aptitude and correspondingly lacks this or that other aptitude. For instance, I know by looking within myself that I have a good memory and a good ear for verse; but I also know that I am bad at learning languages and at some forms of athletics, such as cricket. I know from the experience of a long lifetime (and I should have thought that most men would know before they were thirty) that individual aptitudes of all kinds have each their proper place, and only by recognizing each and using it can society be well served.

For instance, I have known in my time a politician who was put at the head of the gang by the other politicians because he was universally regarded as the most inept among them, so that his promotion could give rise to no jealousies. He was a stop-gap and universally taken to be a complete fool – even as politicians go. Well, this man turned out to be an excellent chess-player!

I knew another man who had an hereditary position of great wealth and consequence, involving (in the society to which he belonged) very important duties. He also was universally regarded as deficient, in the full sense of that word. Yet I discovered quite by accident that he was a first-rate fisherman. He was high in his class among those who pull salmon out of the water.

I have further discovered from evidence, and so, should I think, has any man who meets a fair number of his fellows, that the men who conduct great capitalist enterprises and become rich thereby have each their own aptitudes, but *not one special aptitude for handling large masses of capital.* Some are dull, mechanical, simple monsters, jabbed forward or suddenly tripped up by pure accident. A friend of mine who had vast experience in looking after a large works in the North of England said to me that he knew of no post in his factory which could not be well filled at a salary of two thousand dollars a year. What commanded a higher salary (said he) was not the "organizing power", which most intelligent people have got in a sufficient degree, but knowing the ropes, so that one could get the better of rivals; relationships; and the power of putting on what is called "pressure" — of which the less said the better. He might have added, I think, that sort of routine superstition whereby to a particular job there is attached a particular salary, the size of which has very little connection with the real value of the job.

The use of history leads to just the same conclusion. The people who have creative effect upon the lives of their contemporaries and the development of society have often been men given up to avarice; but they have often also been men who cared nothing for money — and the greater part of them were of that last sort, best for social purposes if not for individual sanctity, which is content with a strong middle-class position and a life free from anxiety upon the one hand or ambition upon the other. Plato for instance, and probably Aristotle, were like that. The concep-

tion that there is some particular type of wonderful man who can do things better than others because he has got rich through the modern concentration of capital is a superstition peculiar to this time in which hardly any other activity is thought worth while. If ever the arts revive, if our civilization should be saved from the gulf into which it is plunging, the superstition will disappear.

As to the third form of ignorance, ignorance of the people around us, I have wandered into the discussion of that already. But I will ask the reader again to look about him and see whether common observation does not amply confirm the statement that men of high aptitude in a vast number of directions are not to be found everywhere, apart from the particular function of accumulation of wealth or directing its accumulation.

There also underlies this heretical text a fundamentally false conception which I must mention before I leave it for Penty's more pregnant judgement.

The false conception is this: that small property cannot combine or be used in combination; that you can only have large concentrations of human power in the material world by a corresponding concentration of control in the hands of a few. That is not what has happened at all in the past, and there is no reason why it should happen in the future. The great enterprises of antiquity were undertaken for the most part by authoritative command: that of a monarch or a general; but those of the Middle Ages were undertaken by corporations.

If a man set out today to erect the Cathedral of Seville – supposing any man today should have the

vision of beauty required — he would get a contractor for the whole job. The contractor would concentrate on seeing how cheaply he could do it below the price of contract so that his profit should be as large as possible; the people who did the work would be wage-slaves. But when Seville Cathedral was built it was built by guilds, by cooperative effort, by the coming together of hundreds and perhaps thousands of men economically free and heads of families. There was a cooperation of effort, obviously, or the united perfect thing could never have arisen; but it was a coordination of great numbers of free men, an accepted coordination, not an imposed one — still less a coordination having for its motive the individual greed of one already far too wealthy man.

If ever we succeed in restoring property and its correlative, economic freedom, we need not trouble about any lack of talent for the administration of capital in great amounts used cooperatively; the talent is there on all sides.

When I turn to the other text, that of Mr. Penty, I confess I am dealing with something more serious. Ever since modern machinery began to interfere with human life (that is, roughly speaking, since about a hundred years ago; since the introduction of steam transport and large units of machinery dependent upon steam) the complaint has grown until it is now almost universal. Nearly all men who have the sense of beauty or even of justice, nearly all men who have a sense of right living, complain of the influence of the machine. In England where the disease arose and where its earliest effects were felt the protests were

as vigorous as they were futile. You have it in the exquisite prose of Ruskin, in the mediocre literary work but strong propaganda of William Morris. You have it of course in the warped but witty mind of Samuel Butler.

Now none of these men nor any of the host of others who proclaimed the same dissatisfactions were trained in philosophy. Nor had any of them a general religion such as gives to the average man a sufficient philosophy without any special training. Had they enjoyed that advantage, whether of religion at large or a special education, they would have considered first principles and discovered that the mind directs human affairs and is the master of material conditions, which men create for themselves and use.

No one denies of course that material conditions react upon the mind; but what everyone of sense will deny most vigorously is that the dead thing determines life. It is not so. It is the living thing which determines the dead material. "*Il suffit de vouloir.*" A society or even an individual determined upon this or that in the possible arrangement of material affairs will in some great measure attain his end. A man who cannot bear to read by electric light will manage to use candles; he will forego the advantages and cheapness of the more modern instrument. A man who is made ill by noise will manage somehow to get the opportunity of working without noise. A whole society to which noise was an abomination would build its houses and streets so that it was not troubled by that abomination.

You may take for a proof the way in which men deal with excessive heat. Look at the construction of

houses built upon ancient tradition in North Africa and Southern Spain. You will find that all the arrangements are directed towards warding off the inconvenience of heat. You will find internal spacious courtyards; the living rooms and especially the sleeping rooms turned inwards; the streets narrow, or if not narrow arcaded. The will of man has produced the material surroundings of man in a fashion consonant to his needs.

But there perhaps comes a designer, some northern contractor or architect, who attempts to build a new quarter of the city in the fashion of his own climate. He lays out broad streets, where the glare is intolerable, accentuated by the reverberation of heat from the great white walls. He puts the living rooms and bedrooms on the *outside* of the new houses—he does everything in the way it should not be done. Now this error is not the result of compulsion, it is the result of ignorance, and a sufficient time will certainly correct it.

It is so with our use of machinery. Machinery does us harm if we use it harmfully. When a man says, "Machine-made products are always monotonous", then the answer is, "Use them only to make products which can be monotonous without doing harm". Use your machinery for cutting up wood into certain sections, do not try to make it do the work of a carver.

As for the man who tells you that the machine-made thing must oust the thing less dependent upon machinery for its production and more dependent upon individual human effort, he is using the word "must" without considering the meaning of his terms.

There is no "must" about it. Obviously the machine-made thing will be cheaper and may be enormously cheaper; but that does not imply the necessity for accepting it and living with it. It is cheaper to go about in a sack with a hole in it for one's head than to wear the complicated tubular clothes which I and my fellow males are wearing at this moment. The reason we do not go about in sacks with holes for our heads to come through is because we use our wills in another fashion, in the fashion which is the fashion for men's clothes today in what was once Christendom.

I remember an old gentleman of whom I was very fond, and who, having great wealth, lived in an enormous house (more like a palace than a house) in the middle of London. His wife, his physician, and his children all insisted upon his having a lift to go up to his bedroom. He said he would have no such vulgar thing as a lift (which is the London term for an elevator) and that he was not going to have his house turned into an hotel. At last, suffering from the weakness of age, he was overborne by the coalition against him, they put in a lift – and the very first time it was used it stuck between two floors. The shouts of triumph of the old gentleman during the half hour when he was imprisoned thus between earth and heaven did one's heart good to hear. He felt that wisdom and beauty had been justified in one of their children at least; he said that some god had interfered. And no doubt he was right.

There has never been a time in the history of the world in which it was not relatively easier and cheaper to make things all of one sort; there has never been a

time in the history of the world, no, not even our own time though it may be thought to have reached the last limits of degradation, in which there was not at work the strong human instinct for breaking the chains of monotony. Every innocent child which scratches letters with a nail on the enamel of an automobile bears witness to that truth. I defy any man not paralyzed in brain and body to live long in a room with what is called "modern furniture" without sooner or later impressing his personality upon it. Sooner or later even our rectangular blank spaces will get some kind of decoration forced upon them.

At any rate in so far as we submit to what is called "the tyranny of the machine" it is *we* that submit to sloth, not the machine that "conquers". The machine cannot feel, or think, and properly speaking, *is* not.

Mr. Penty adduces an instance which he thinks conclusive. When the Distributist acclaims the possibilities of the small motor he answers triumphantly that the small motor was only made accessible to the small man by mass production.

To begin with that is only partly true; you need not have these huge concentrations of production to make motors at a reasonable price; you must have a *considerable* concentration to do so, but you need not have a whole city full of wage-slaves all doing the same silly thing in the same inhuman way. And to go on with, if you wanted variety, you could have similarity in the basic things without similarity in the details; you could give opportunity for individual changes. What prevents that variability even in the automobile business is the lack of spontaneous free demand. There are any number of people for instance

who would still prefer a slower machine with more head-room to the type which the millionaire manufacturer puts before them with the label, "Take it or leave it". There are any number of people who prefer an automobile in which they can ride in the open air when they feel inclined; and have shut up when they feel inclined. I am one of those people myself, and by taking a little trouble I got exactly what I wanted at a very little increased expense.

Now my last consideration on this matter is to me personally a consoling one. After all, all this doesn't very much matter, because if men will not exercise the divine faculty of will, if they allow themselves indefinitely to be run by others under the illusion that they are being run by "the machine", that evil will correct itself after the usual fashion – by death. If they that take the sword perish by the sword (which, as the old Don said of Euclid, is roughly true) certainly those who take the machine will perish by the machine. They will not long maintain the multiple, diverse, organic, individual human being, doing merely mechanical work. It will kill him or he will kill it. The modern phase is still quite young; it is already showing signs of senile decay. If we do not reform ourselves, by emphasizing to the best of our individual abilities diversity and multiplicity, then nature will take her revenge by destroying our remaining culture, and our mechanized cities will become rubble. No great loss.

Morals and Poetry

A Defense of Both

GEOFFREY STONE

RECENT criticism of poetry, as is natural enough, has reflected the moral and philosophical confusion of the times, and in this it has also reflected recent poetry. But poetry has, to a large extent, been content to accept the confusion for what it is and consciously to mirror it, while criticism, out of the very nature of its task, has sought to bring some order, if not to its subject, at least to our understanding of it, and its confusions have not been conscious ones. The best critics of verse, from Philip Sidney to T. S. Eliot, have usually been poets themselves, so it is perhaps not odd that our present-day poet-critics have attempted to raise up poetry as a sort of absolute at the same time they have denied in their verses the possibility of any certainty at all. In a way, this is pardonable; for the professional man is inevitably disposed to attach a high value to his particular profession, and in a world where he is not very sure about anything but the details of his specialty, his evaluation will be correspondingly higher.

A chief figure in this exaltation of poetry – or one who is in many ways the most typical – is not, however, a poet, but a critic and a philosopher: I. A. Richards. Like so many modern doctrines, Mr. Richards's theories present paradoxical aspects, at once undermining the validity of poetry and seeking

to make it serve ends hitherto reserved for other activities. Mr. Richards seems to be so impressed by the methods and results of physical science that he has concluded truth is to be had only through science; but he sees that poetry, which cannot be produced by the methods of science, still supplies many wants of the human mind and heart – wants which Mr. Richards himself feels and esteems worthy of satisfaction. Caught between his scientific Asmodeus and the wine-dark sea of poetry, Mr. Richards has found a way out in the theory of "pseudo-belief".

The idea behind pseudo-belief is a fairly simple one, however complex its implications: it is the notion that a thing may be true for poetry but not true for science (which is said to account for the rest of the knowable universe). It has been voiced under other names by many writers, from Bendetto Croce to Max Eastman. The theory is a species of poetic pragmatism. Though when one accepts the theory poetry thereby becomes something of a wish-dream, it still is not destroyed; for, existing in a self-sufficient realm, poetry is its own perfection, amenable to no rules or disciplines except those inherent in its own nature. Of course, there are critics of a different mind than Mr. Richards's who would say pretty much the same: the poetic discipline is inherent in the nature of poetry. But the thing to observe in Mr. Richards's theories is what he conceives poetry's nature to be: it is evident that poetry for him is the queen of the non-sciences, and within its realm any poetic word will always be the final law. This looks tautological, as will any absolute to the person not convinced it is really something ultimate.

By thus raising poetry to a thing-in-itself, Mr. Richards and his followers feel they have escaped the prevailing confusion, without being so timid as to deny it (for, somehow, uncertainty is held to be more courageous than certainty); they have their cake while the ruthless universe is eating it. Such an opposition between a real world and an unreal one, with the latter informed by a superior set of values, is typical of Romanticism, which, since it must yet exist in the real world, is characterized by a constant wavering between extremes, by attempts to balance an ideal world off against a real one (both conceived in exaggerated terms) and to get the best of each. The classic example is the contrast between Shelley's life and his sentiments, but the contemporary scene does not lack examples set in even sharper terms; poets who are the laureates of the ugly, ministers of the Gospel who foresee the Kingdom of Heaven in a higher standard of living, pacifists eager for war, and our New York Communists who applaud the latest reports on the Stakhanov system while they protest the speed-up in Detroit factories. The paradox is visible in Mr. Richards's own interests, for he is an admirer of Jeremy Bentham and an apologist for the sort of poetry Bentham thought all poetry to be. The reconciling of irreconcilable opposites always becomes the task of men who start from mistaken assumptions, and it is for this reason that so much modern philosophy, despite the depth and beauty of its passing insights, strikes one as a desperate attempt to give the appearance of consistency to what is at bottom a contradiction.

T. S. Eliot has taken Mr. Richards to task, in *The*

Use of Poetry, for his misuse of poetry, saying Mr. Richards would have poetry provide what is only to be got from religion; but it is a delicate point whether Mr. Eliot's strictures come more from his differences with Mr. Richards or his agreement with him. Mr. Eliot's own theories of poetry have been much used by those who have sought to raise what might be called an Absolutist theory of poetry; they have especially drawn upon his remark that the emotion informing a poem is something very different from the emotion which moved the poet to composition. This contention of Mr. Eliot's seems a just one – literature and raw feeling being two different matters – but when it is taken to mean that the quality and range of feeling in a poem are limited only by the effectiveness with which they can be combined in an aesthetic whole (*i.e.*, that poetic feeling and human feeling come in for very different kinds of judgement), the way is opened for any kind of unrestraint.

Again, the belief that incorporating things into an aesthetic whole is the one sure indication of the presence of successful poetry can find much to draw on in Mr. Eliot's essay on Dante. In that essay he considers the difficult problem of the relation of poetry and ideas, and tries to establish to what extent our appreciation of Dante the poet depends upon our agreement with Dante's philosophical and religious views. This, of course, involves the question of poetry's self-sufficiency – if we can fully enjoy the *Comedy* while entirely disagreeing with Dante's general outlook, then poetry must be a thing-in-itself; otherwise, not. "You are not called upon to believe" Dante's philosophical and religious beliefs, decides Mr.

Eliot. "If you can read poetry as poetry, you will 'believe' in Dante's theology exactly as you believe in the physical reality of his journey; that is you suspend both belief and disbelief. . . . The vital matter is that Dante's poem is a whole; that you must in the end come to understand every part of it to understand any part."

Despite the final phrase, it is hard not to conclude from this that Mr. Eliot means that Dante's philosophy, in so far as it affects his poem, is a device of the same nature as his allegorical journey. From this point of view, the philosophy's correspondence to reality is a small matter; the reader indulges himself in a "pseudo-belief" in Thomism, and his reward is a full appreciation of the linguistic and architectonic beauties of the *Comedy*. But, throughout his essay, Mr. Eliot expresses opinions not strictly "poetic", but dealing with matters of psychology and morals, so one must conclude that he, unlike Mr. Richards, holds that poetry can embody truths which are true for more than poetry alone. In his latest book, he says that only literary standards can reveal what is literature, but to these must be added moral standards to reveal what is great literature. Certainly, the most proper sentiments expressed without skill are not literature; but Mr. Eliot seems to imply more than this. "I deny, in short," he says in the earlier essay, "that the reader must share the beliefs of the poet in order to enjoy the poetry *fully*" (my italics). Although he goes on to qualify this statement, it is just such remarks that lend weight to Wyndham Lewis's attack on Mr. Eliot, in *Men Without Art*, as a "pseudoist", or one who would enjoy a reputation for

classical and Catholic discipline while allowing himself all the latitude of Romantic expansiveness. This same ambiguity in Mr. Eliot's position has been utilized by those who wish to claim for themselves a place in the line of literary tradition on the score of their eccentric verse productions.

In the essays of Allen Tate one perceives this contradiction in terms very similar to Mr. Eliot's. For in seeking to release poetry from any bondage to science, or any competition with it, Mr. Tate insists upon the inutility of poetry to such an extent that he, too, seems to declare it a sort of self-sufficient absolute. At the same time, as he brilliantly shows in "The Profession of Letters in the South", he is aware of literature's dependence upon a tradition that permeates all the reaches of society — and so is in many ways extra-literary. But it is impossible to establish any valid relationship between "absolute" poetry and a tradition not exclusively literary: one may say life needs the latter, but, having placed poetry beyond life, the tradition cannot be brought to bear upon the writing of literature. I do not claim that Messrs. Eliot and Tate have, in sum, said that they adhere to the decadent doctrine of art for its own sake, or that the full implications of their position result in such a stand; but there are difficulties and obscurities in their thought which lend themselves to such interpretation by those who will — friendly critics, as well as unfriendly.

Mr. Tate has accused Irving Babbitt and his followers of putting verse to non-poetical uses and making it a prop for the moral life. In consequence of this, he says, the humanists are not to be distinguished in

their attitude toward poetry from the Communists: both would make poetry "a document of the social will". There is some justice in Mr. Tate's contention, for there is an agreement at this point between Marxists and humanists, standing though they do at opposite poles of thought: they would both make poetry subservient to morals. Stephen Spender, the English Communist poet, for instance, recognizes the artist's need for a "unifying moral subject", and would have him leave the "destructive principle" in which the chief writers of the first three decades of the century have been immersed, to make affirmations extending beyond the limits of literature. In his book, *The Destructive Principle*, Mr. Spender, like other critics mentioned here, shows an inclinatoin to regard art as quite autonomous, and so his plea for a universal moral approach hits a fatal obstruction; but, despite this contradiction, he must be credited with having perceived that both life and art are to be understood in terms of right and wrong, and that for art right and wrong are not merely technical matters. His fellow poet, Cecil Day Lewis, has come to much the same conclusion, and has tried to show, in a recent number of *New Masses*, that the artist must subscribe to a code which will serve equally well for his art and his own life.

The defect in Messrs. Spender's and Day Lewis's theories, however, is the system of morals they espouse. As Marxists, they accept a false analysis of man's nature and society. What inclines the Romantic poet toward this particular heresy is a complex matter and would take much space to set forth; here it must serve to suggest that true conversion is a rare phenom-

enon and the aesthete who suddenly sees the light in Marx may have left less of his old life behind than he thinks. Because of their intellectual foundation, Messrs. Spender and Day Lewis, and the Communist critics in general, are committed to views which will eventually land them in the very dilemma from which they are trying to escape. Marxism – which is a product of nineteenth-century Romanticism, both in its own mode of thinking and in the things against which it reacts – misses the true terms of the recurrent human problem by placing man's salvation (in a non-religious sense) outside of himself. In Marxian terms, this means that the poet will be able to realize his art fully when society is suitably transformed; in common-sense terms, it means that the Marxian poet looks forward to escape from the necessity for self-discipline in a socialist Utopia. At this juncture the poet's moral problem becomes most plain: it is a problem of how he looks on his own will, his ability to direct and choose, and of what he regards as its proper end. In other words, it is a problem of man's nature.

Irving Babbitt concentrated his attention with singular steadiness on this problem. While, like the Communists, Babbitt saw that poetry is not to be divorced from the *mores* of the society in which it arises, and that this society will in turn derive its *mores*, in a large measure, from the examples provided by its poets, he was critical of the image man had made for himself as well as critical of the society which man had made in that image. Broadly speaking, he found that man could look on himself in either of two ways. He could take the classical view, regarding

his nature as dual and holding that this dualism could be brought to a harmonious resolution by according primacy to the will – the power to select, to restrain, and to direct. Or he could take the Romantic view, denying this dualism and in so far as he gave primacy to the will defining it in terms that made it synonymous with impulse. Impulse is what is imposed upon one, will is what one imposes; and from this distinction the relevance of Babbitt's ideas to the theories of poetry we have been examining should be evident. For if man is a creature whose actions are decided wholly by circumstance, then such poetry as he produces is the result of the chance conjunction of a particular personality with some exterior force: it is necessarily unique and perfect of its kind because there is no possibility of its being anything other than what it is. And of course it is the personality rather than the circumstance that is prized. If, on the contrary, man has effective control over what he feels and the expression he gives to it, poetry has a moral concern, for morals are a matter of choosing between right and wrong in any given instance. Since this choice is man's most "human" activity, to exclude it from the realm of poetry is to make of poetry, no matter what beauties reflection will find in it, no more than the music of an Aeolian harp; freed from the responsibility of choice, it is so free that it is no longer art, if by art one understands what is contrived and made.

Once we have accepted the dualistic view of man's nature, with its attendant emphasis on will, we can see that even the most ardent practitioner of amoral poetry cannot achieve his desired end. Having the

capability of exercising his will, man does not escape the duty to use his will by denying its freedom, nor does he escape the evils that follow on making a wrong choice: his behavior has a moral pattern whether he admits it or not. In a like manner, poetry, dealing with human feelings or ideal types of action, cannot escape embodying some sort of moral judgement: as a product of the human mind such a judgement is always implicit in it. The feelings or actions, then, that poetry holds up as typical will reflect the general view of life entertained by the poet, and in making a complete evaluation of his poetry this view will have to be considered. If the view, so far as it is manifested in his verse, is repugnant to reason and experience, the poetry has a serious defect, not only morally, but also technically, for the poet has, so to speak, either failed to use certain chords he might have struck or has struck them in an inept manner.

There is nothing in the view that poetry is susceptible of moral judgement which unduly simplifies the task of criticism; there is to be found in it no brief for the critic who hunts out the "proper" sentiments and only where he finds them allows that true poetry exists. Indeed, it will more often be the amoral critic who is the searcher for proper sentiments; having denied that he is looking for any such thing, he is left free by his own and his reader's laxity to applaud judgements which support his prejudices or drift with the same current of thought in which he unwittingly floats. When the importance of general concepts in literature is recognized, the critic must accordingly extend the field of his inquiry; but it is difficult to see that he suffers any loss from this except one of ease.

Poetry, if I have followed correctly the implications of Babbitt's ideas, being a human product cannot escape the human conditions. Its human conditions will naturally irk many. To escape these conditions some will resort to the "intuitions" that well up unbidden in the self and, saying that they give a truth superior to reason's, declare them the proper stuff of poetry. Others will, like Father Thomas Gilby* and the Abbé Brémond, ally the poetic experience to the mystical and thus try to transcend the limits of reason. And Babbitt himself holds that poetry, through the ethical imagination, arrives at truths not discoverable by mere ratiocination. But the working of the ethical imagination is not limited to poetry alone, and it functions in almost every province of life. Thus poetry is intimately related to life, seizing upon the disparate facts of experience and, in the light of the imagination, remaking them into ordered wholes, meaningful by having been related to man's understanding of himself. Therein lies the true imaginative quality of poetry; it is this operation which is described by the doctrine of "imitation" and pointed to by the belief that the poet is above all a "maker": it is the poet's ability to represent things as they are at the highest level of our experience — the level at which we grasp the full potentiality of a thing's being by seeing its moral significance.

All this may seem so "abstract" (though Babbitt's thought was not abstract in the sense of having many metaphysical assumptions) that it is scarcely of practical use to those who would write poetry; and Bab-

* In his excellent book, *Poetic Experience* (Sheed and Ward, 1934).

bitt was in truth so concerned with basic ideas that he rarely concerned himself with the secondary question of their fitting expression. The lack is no defect in his work, for the problems he addressed himself to arose from a fundamental confusion in ideas, and it was fundamental concepts which had first to be set right – that was a constantly reiterated part of his argument. Yet a statement of Babbitt's doctrines in their relation to the more concrete issues of the poet's craft has been needed. Yvor Winters has now met this need, with great ability, in a book called *Primitivism and Decadence**. Professor Babbitt, it is true, is mentioned but once in the body of the volume, and then in a footnote, but in his preface Mr. Winters acknowledges his "general indebtedness" to him (though he makes some rather cryptic remarks about the grave defects he finds in Babbitt's writings). He does not use the Babbittian terminology, and probably would lay no claim to the title of "humanist", but this, when addressing experimental poets, might be looked on as a sort of happy protective coloration – however far such a device is from Mr. Winters's intention.

His initial chapter Mr. Winters forthrightly entitles "The Morality of Poetry". A poem, he declares, "should offer us new perceptions, not only of the exterior universe, but of human experience as well". To offer these new perceptions it uses, of course, the abstract vehicle of language, which it qualifies by putting into an "experiential complex", or the poem itself. But since the poem is offering a new perception,

* PRIMITIVISM AND DECADENCE: A STUDY OF AMERICAN EXPERIMENTAL POETRY *by Yvor Winters* (Arrow Editions. 146 pp. $2.50).

in other words making a communication, it does not remain a mere experiential complex, and the "quality of transferable or generalized experience might be regarded as the defining quality of lyrical poetry". When its defining quality is held to be its uniqueness, a poem can be judged on no other score; to say it is unique is to say the final word; but since it is possessed of a general nature, it comes under a broader purview and we must regard it also from a moral viewpoint. This means that poems, though good in themselves as examples of the dexterous use of language, are capable of being graded according to an extrinsic set of values. It follows that "if a poem, in so far as it is good, represents the comprehension on a moral plane of a given experience . . . some experiences offer very slight difficulties and some very great, and that poem will be most valuable, which, granted it achieves formal perfection, represents the most difficult victory". This victory, so far as the poem is concerned, takes place on two planes – the poetic and the moral. On the former plane, it is mastery over the material of the poet's craft; it is the poet's submission (for wise submission is mastery) to the poetic discipline, both as a means of knowledge and of communication. The victory through poetic discipline is a concomitant of the moral victory, for "if the poetic discipline is to have steadiness and direction, it requires an antecedent discipline of ethical thinking and of at least some ethical feeling, which may be in whole or in part the gift of religion or social tradition, or which may be largely the result of individual acquisition by way of study".

Mr. Winters anticipates the common objection to

the ethical criterion of poetry which states that morals are so various, changing with time and place, that they supply no standards for judging verse; which says that since we enjoy poetry by men whose religious and philosophical beliefs we do not share, religion and philosophy can have no essential relation to poetry. This objection he meets in comparing George Herbert and Thomas Hardy:

Though a belief in any form of determinism should, if the belief is pushed to its logical ends, eliminate the belief in, and consequently the functioning of, whatever it is that we call the will, yet there is no trace of any kind of disintegration in Hardy's poetic style, in his sense of form, which we have seen to be, so far as writing is concerned, identical with the will or the ability to control and shape one's experience. The tragic necessity of putting by the claims of the world without abandonment of self-control, without loss of the ability to go on living, for the present, intelligently and well, is just as definitely the subject of Hardy's poetry as of Herbert's. We have in both poets *a common moral territory* which is far greater than are the theological regions they do not share; for, on the one hand, *the fundamental concepts of morality are common to intelligent men regardless of theological orientation*, except in so far as mortality may be simply denied or ignored, and, on the other hand, the Absolute is in its nature inscrutable and offers little material for speculation. . . . [Hardy] was thrown back upon traditional literary and folk wisdom in working out moral situations. . . . Like many another man who has been unable to think clearly, he was saved by the inability to think coherently: had he been coherent, he would probably have been about as interesting as Godwin. . . . (My italics.)

Hardy, in other words, paid his way with the traditional legacy of the civilized Westerner, which is broadly the same as that of the civilized Oriental or ancient Greek. It seems almost needless to add that he would have been better off for the possession of a sound conscious philosophy; there are certain regions of experience across which his determinism will not convey him safely. When a false philosophy is developed to the point where it cuts the poet off from the common moral territory entirely, it vitiates almost everything he writes – Mr. Winters adduces Hart Crane as an example.

Though at present it figures little in critical discussions, there is nothing especially original in this view of the relations of morals and poetry; as Mr. Winters says, it has "been current in English criticism since the time of Sidney". But the particular and valuable contribution of Mr. Winters to the question, aside from his capable restatement of forgotten truths, is his demonstration of the link between moral control and good poetic technique; they are not, he demonstrates, ultimately separable. In establishing this connection, he reviews the major forms of creative composition, showing that when they are used economically and effectively it is in conjunction with a traditional moral attitude toward the experience they embody. He also shows that certain other forms have been developed to express states of mind which follow on a "theoretic rejection of all human endeavor in favor of some vaguely apprehended but ecstatically asserted existence of a superior sort". These forms by their very nature result in an incomplete and vague expression; it is a sort of reciprocal action, in which

the faultiness of the thought requires a faultiness of expression. On this score, Mr. Winters attacks what he calls the fallacy of "expressive form", the belief that the poetic vehicle should embody those defects and hesitations which the poet feels in himself or in his subject-matter. If we maintain, as we must, that poetry is a creation embodying the poet's moral control over his subject and his technical control over the means of expressing it, the error in the theory of expressive form becomes patent, for such form is a submission to the dictates of the subject and has abandoned the controlling will to make the poet subject to his "subject". "The form," says Mr. Winters, "succumbs to the raw material of the poem."

Expressive form inevitably results in a minimizing of the rational content of the poem, but the appearance of rationality continues to be exploited, especially through what Mr. Winters terms "pseudo-reference". Pseudo-reference he classifies under some seven types, but in each case it takes the form of an implication of rational meaning where either no meaning exists or meaning is so private as not to be communicable. Obviously, the use of such a device is technically shoddy; morally it is reprehensible because it encourages, by providing a form for it, a species of "semi-automatic writing". The practitioner of such writing "is more interested in the promptings of the 'subconscious' mind . . . than in that which is wholly understood" and he chooses to "devote himself to exploring that realm of experience which he shares with sea-anemones, cabbages, and onions, in preference to exploring the realm of experience shared specifically with men".

After his consideration of methods, Mr. Winters passes on to examine "convention". By that term he understands "the initial assumption of feeling or value to which the poem is laying claim". A poem's convention, then, presupposes a certain quality of feeling which shall be proper to its subject-matter. If this feeling is either in excess or defect of what the subject demands, there will be a consequent misuse of the means of expression; the reader will find himself troubled by surcharged adjectives or a frame of reference to which nothing in the poem gives him a clue. The establishment of a usable convention, or number of conventions, depends, of course, upon the recognition of some norm of feeling which only tradition or moral judgement can supply. Non-traditional and "pure" poetry also has its conventions, but these tend to be either quite personal or not consciously recognized, and are thus open to no rational check, with the result that they soon degenerate into some "vice of feeling", if they did not start as such. The technical consequence of an aberrant convention is usually some kind of expressive form, it being impossible to make a "lucid and controlled statement" out of a feeling that rejects the existence of these qualities. That one may make a lucid and controlled statement *of* such a feeling is not denied. Mr. Winters's analysis of convention — though he does not point this out — is related to the classical doctrines of decorum and taste; for a wise convention is what is decorous, and taste is the means of determining it; he implies this when he observes "It is an obscure procedure, but Landor is surely greater than Swinburne and Bridges than Housman."

"Many experimental poets," says Mr. Winters, "by limiting themselves to an abnormal convention, limit themselves in range or in approach: that is, become primitives or decadents of necessity; and they lack the energy or ability to break free of the elaborate and mechanical habits which they have, in perfecting, imposed upon themselves." The primitive, such as William Carlos Williams, by a false simplification of experience and the development of a means of expression adapted only to the use of his limited material, misses whole ranges of feeling and thought that are the heritage of civilized man. Despite this, the primitive may produce verse of some value, for the limitations of his material do not preclude an able expression of it. The decadent, whom Mr. Winters finds typically represented in Hart Crane, commands wider resources of technique and feeling, but his work is "incomplete formally" or "weakened by a vice of feeling"; "it is incomplete poetry". Primitivism and decadence, Mr. Winters concludes, are the two major faults of modern experimental poetry. Both represent a failure to take a comprehensive and just view of experience, the one because it has simplified the moral problem or chosen only the subjects where it is incidental, the other because it has denied it or stated it in corrupt terms.

The primitive as an historical phenomenon, rising in an early period of a literature's development*, is of

* Mr. Winters speaks as though the contemporary primitive could be accepted at his face value and compared not unfavorably with, say, the author of "The Wanderer". Ideally this is perhaps possible, but is it so practically? In the actual reading of a poem we cannot rule out our historical consciousness, which must make us aware that "The Wanderer" was a *complete* expres-

course justified by circumstance, but there is no necessity about the appearance of the decadent, except in so far as he is the result of the philosophy that nourishes him. "There is current at present a very general opinion," says Mr. Winters, "that it is impossible in our time to write good poetry in the mode, let us say, of Bridges, either because of the kind of poetry that has been written since ('the stylistic advances of Eliot and Pound'), or because of social conditions ('the chaos of modern thought'), or because of both, or because of something else. . . . The simple fact of the matter is, that it is harder to imitate Bridges than to imitate Pound or Eliot, as it is harder to appreciate him, because Bridges is a finer poet and a saner man; he knows more than they, and to meet him on his own ground we must know more than to meet them."

The opportunities, difficulties, and rewards of writing as Bridges did – what is entailed in writing verse in the traditional conventions and meters – Mr. Winters considers in his final chapter. I shall not attempt to expound here Mr. Winters's methods of scanning both regular and free verse, which he lays down at some length and from which he draws his general conclusions in favor of the traditional meters. His conclusions are entirely defensible by other methods of approach – though the one he has taken will be of much value to anyone with a technical interest in poetry. He contends, with every show of reason, that free verse is by and large not free, and imposes crippling restrictions upon those who use it. Its "only norm . . . is perpetual variation, and the only prin-

sion for its age (probably saying more to it than it does to us), while Dr. Williams always says less to us than we know he might.

ciple governing the selection of any foot is a feeling of rhythmical continuity". But variation is in itself a negative thing, and its value in prosody is that of surprise, which ceases to exist when it is used without restraint – as Mr. Winters points out, "a man who speaks habitually at the top of his voice cannot raise his voice". Even the seeming gain in complexity turns out, on examination, to be more apparent than real, for it is impossible to imbue the variations with much significance:

> One may state it as a general law, moral as well as metrical, that an increase in complexity commonly results in a decrease in emphasis: extreme emphasis, with the resultant limitation of scope, is a form of unbalance. Sexual experience is overemphasized in the works of D. H. Lawrence, because Lawrence understood so little else – and consequently understood sexual experience so ill. In a very few poems, notably in the sonnet "To R. B.", Hopkins avoids his usual tone in a considerable measure, by reverting toward standard meter. . . . But a similar reversion is impossible in free verse, a medium in which the reversion would simply result in a breakdown of the form. It is difficult to achieve in free verse the freedom of movement and the range of material offered one by the older forms.

To show the possibilities the older meters hold of free movement and adjustment to a wide variety of subject-matter, Mr. Winters examines the most rigid of the classical forms, the heroic couplet. Its very inflexibility, he finds, allows the greatest flexibility of mood and content, for against its rigid structure the slightest variation must show with an added significance. But the gain is not only in metrical diversity:

the thought gains a new freedom by its being enabled to move within a constant frame of metrical reference, whereas in the more complex forms the thought must be made consistently subservient to the movement of the whole poem — and that movement, as we have seen, cannot ever be wholly "free". Both these things result in a gain in precision, which is the desideratum of any poet who believes that his verse should show a mastery of experience and bring home to his readers a subtler sense of that in which this mastery consists. The instruments which the traditional conventions and meters offer are not devices by which anyone may pass himself off for a poet; one can always say with more certainty whether a man has mastered the couplet than whether he is a genius expressing himself in the form unique with his genius. Mr. Winters's book, by example and precept, points to an analogy, and even a necessary connection, between the man who directs and enriches his own experience by drawing on past wisdom and the poet who finds his medium at once an instrument of his will and a thing with laws which the body of our literature shows are superior to personal whim.

Primitivism and Decadence is a short book, but it throws a clear and steady light on questions of poetry too often obscured by eccentric theory-building or plain irresponsibility. Mr. Winters comes to an affirmation of traditional standards, not out of any unreasoning reaction against the surface peculiarities of modern verse, but out of his acute understanding of its aims and methods, and his realization of how far these fall short of what the best poetry can attain. In this résumé of his book (a résumé in which a number

of connective links for which he is not responsible are inserted), I have not been able to touch upon his estimates of individual writers, which add greatly to the interest and value of the work, though leaving here and there room for dissent. A writer who strikes as radically as does Mr. Winters at the underlying postulates of modern poetic thought will perforce seek to alter the poetic hierarchy of the day, and Mr. Winters does not build up from the Metaphysicals through Hopkins to Mr. Auden, to view from that height the first flush of the Red dawn. The names in his pantheon – Charles Churchill, Robert Bridges, T. Sturge Moore, Lady Winchelsea, Elizabeth Daryush – doubtless fall upon modern ears with an alien sound, but the criticism of poetry is idle if it does not affect our taste in poetry; and those who read Mr. Winters with understanding will find themselves left with a deeper and more reasoned taste for the poetry he speaks of in his closing lines:

> It will be seen that what I desire of a poem is a clear understanding of motive, and a just evaluation of feeling; the justice of the evaluation persisting even into the sound of the least important syllable. Such a poem is a perfect and complete act of the spirit; it calls upon the full life of the spirit; it is difficult of attainment, but I am aware of no good reason to be contented with less.

Arthur J. Penty: Architect and Sociologist

Stanley James

It will come as a surprise to many that writing in the case of the late Arthur J. Penty was not a natural gift. It was only by painful effort that he acquired his mastery of strong nervous English and his powers of lucid argument. The pen that learned to sum up an argument in a few brief sentences of penetrating wisdom cost him much labor before he could wield it successfully. At the age of thirteen he was top of his class and his father then took him away from school and set him to work in his drawing office. When he was about twenty-one he suddenly realized that he was entirely uneducated except in his own particular craft. Probably he had read no more than half a dozen books since he left school. Then, having attended some lectures on the Renaissance and heard Gibbon mentioned, he worked through *The Decline and Fall.* A. R. Orage, later editor of *The New Age*, whose acquaintance he made at an early stage, used to say to him, tapping his forehead, "It's all there, but you have to take a pickaxe to get at it!" It was not till 1906, when he was thirty-one, that his first book – *The Restoration of the Gild System* – was published and, small as it was, it took him two years to write it. Before it was finally drafted, it had to be rewritten forty times. A handcart was necessary to take away all the rejected drafts when he changed his

lodgings. The labor had been frightful. "I ate eight bone pen-holders writing it," he confessed. Though it was as a writer that he was chiefly known, he never, to the end of his days, became a bookish man. I take this as one of the secrets of his later success. In *A Guildsman's Interpretation of History* he wrote: "The Franciscans had a strong practical bend of mind. Learning being forbidden them by the rule of their order, they naturally acquired the invaluable habit of observing facts for themselves – a habit which book-learning is very apt to destroy. Men who begin life with much book-knowledge are very apt to look at things from the special angle provided by the books they have read and to neglect the lessons which the observation of facts can teach. It was thus that the Franciscans' renunciation of learning stood them in good stead; it proved to be the means whereby a new impulse was given to the acquisition of knowledge." The principle applies to his own case and goes some way to explain the independence of mind and realism which characterized him.

It was as an architect that he always thought and spoke of himself. Bricks and mortar were never far from his thoughts, and all his life any problem to do with building, whether it was a chicken-house or a church, could soon command his absorbed attention. On country walks a two-foot rule and a notebook and pencil were constantly being produced for making and recording measurements of walls, gates, eaves, window bars, brickwork joints, door panels, or any other item that might come in useful. He received his early training as an architect in his father's office in York, and for eight or nine years architecture

was his school and university, whether he was designing in the office, out "on the job", talking to foremen and contractors, watching masons, bricklayers, and carpenters, or sketching and making measurements in the manner described during his annual two weeks' holiday. He designed several buildings in York that received high praise. A monograph on his work appeared in Germany before he was twenty-one. In 1902 he came to London where, among other things, he experimented in designing furniture. But the prospects, for one of his independence, were bleak, and in 1906 he went to New York, where he remained for a year, engaged in the furniture business. Later he was associated with Sir Raymond Unwin in important architectural work connected with the Hampstead Garden Suburb, North London. A *Times* obituary notice described his work as being "distinguished by a refined simplicity". Rarely could there have been anyone whose vocation was more distinctly marked.

These details are necessary for an understanding of the man and his work as a sociologist. It is not merely with the idea of supplying biographical facts that I have stated them but because without them it is impossible to appreciate how he came to be what he was. Penty's views as he afterwards expounded them were intimately related to his personal experiences. True to his innate realism, he acquired his social theories in the school of life. All his days he was up against doctrinaire reformers. That two-foot rule of his was a symbol of the practical wisdom wherewith he measured the pretentious work of Fabians, Communists, National Guildsmen, Douglasites, and Free Traders. It was that school of life which taught him

to detect with such unerring precision the jerry-built character of high-sounding schemes. Remembering the important place he holds in the development of contemporary social ideas as the source of inspiration from which many acknowledged authorities derived their theories, I venture to underline this by quoting from an unpublished work of his an autobiographical passage which, though long and related to matters to be mentioned later on, is of crucial interest at this stage.

By profession [he wrote] I am an architect, and as a young man I met with a great deal of success. Opportunities came to me when I was barely out of my teens; illustrations of my work appeared in the architectural papers, and I came to be regarded as one of the coming men in the profession. Then after several years of prosperity my fortune changed. The ground slipped away under my feet. Commissions ceased to come my way, and from being somebody I fell to the position of being nobody; and this not because of anything I had done or failed to do, but because of economic changes which destroyed the prosperity of that section of the middle class who had been accustomed to give me work. In such circumstances my mind naturally turned to economics, to the problem of finding ways and means of recovering my position. But the more I thought about it the more insoluble it became; every possible line of action was barred for one reason and another. The economic continuity of my life had been broken, and it looked as if nothing less than one of those lucky accidents of fortune we call miracles could lift me out of the pit into which I had fallen. Success in architecture depended upon prestige, upon knowing the right people, the right sort of social contacts. But the changed

economic circumstances had not only left me stranded without either but made me an object of suspicion, because of the popular assumption that every man meets with his deserts; and this in turn reacted to widen the gulf between myself and the public by destroying illusions, and leading me to see things in a different light. And so it came about I entered the vicious circle where misfortune leads to misunderstandings, and misunderstandings to misfortune. . . .

It was while passing through these experiences that the Guild idea came to me. It was evident that the decline of the prosperity of that section of the public which was accustomed to give me work was immediately due to the spread of limited liability companies and the growth of big business which accompanied them. But the spread of limited liability companies was in turn connected with the unrestricted use of machinery, for it was the employment of large capital which the use of machinery involved that had led up to the demand for limited companies. Step by step I traced the economic instability back to the disappearance of the Guilds which had removed all barriers to the growth of the anarchic economic individualism that had claimed me as one of its victims. Thus it came about that the Guild theory began to develop out of the effort to find a solution of my own economic difficulties. It was born of frustration. In the days of my prosperity I had played with the idea of Guild restoration as others had done before me. But there is no reason to suppose I should ever have done anything with it apart from my catastrophic experience, which made the restoration of the Guilds a living issue; nay, it is certain I should not, for apart from that experience I should never have known the inner reality. . . .

If I could have told the story simply as I am telling it now, the writing of my first book, *The Restoration of the Gild System*, would have been a comparatively easy

task. But I felt I could not. I felt that if I did I should not be listened to. It would be assumed that I had built my case upon insufficient foundations and I should be dismissed as a man with a grievance and that would have been the end of Guilds. For in those days the game of musical chairs had only just begun and people did not readily believe that apart from physical misfortune a man might fail through no fault of his own. Hence in order to say what I wanted to say I had to turn myself inside out and learn to state in objective and impersonal terms an experience that was subjective and personal; and it took some learning. But it was a spiritual necessity and it embarked me on a sociological career. The Arts and Crafts idea of uniting artist and craftsman had been promoted for aesthetic reasons; but my experience had taught me that it embodied a great sociological principle. It was a new approach to the problem of social reconstruction; an approach from the point of view of qualities rather than quantities, of personality and aesthetics rather than of external material conditions; and as such it was a step in the direction of a return to that Christian conception of society which sees the heart and mind of man as the active creative principle in the center, and the systems and institutions as its more visible expression, radiating from it, and changing in obedience to changes in motive power in the center; and which affirms that the State is made for man, and not man for the State.

The architect, baffled by his social and economic difficulties, instead of dismissing those difficulties as matters of only individual significance, discovered their more general importance, and having analyzed the situation and arrived at conclusions, set to work to preach the sociological truths thus made known to him. But having become a writer on social ques-

tions, he did not cease to exhibit in this new sphere of work the qualities which had made him a successful architect.

Penty's formative years were spent in an atmosphere of criticism and denial. Schemes for the reconstruction of society abounded but on examination the novelty of these was found to be of a negative character. It was as though a countryside was to be given a fresh appearance by removing all the familiar landmarks. The process that was going on was well described by a correspondent in *The New Age*. The change in the material and economic base of society, he said, was accompanied by the growth of an intellectual fluidity "which is really not so much a definite conviction or emotion as a rotting or a deliquescence, a melting and confounding of the outlines of beliefs and desires, a going to slush of all values, a thawing and liquefaction of all that was hard and permanent in the world. . . . The whole of modernism is an attempt to obliterate distinctions — to discover similarity and unity everywhere. All men are equal, men are the same as women, good is the same as evil, free will does not exist, catastrophe has no place in the universe, and everything is gradually evolved." Such a process indicates the bankruptcy of thought. It is easy to understand how a man with A. J. Penty's strong architectural instincts would react to that. He was by vocation a builder, not a destroyer; the architect-turned-sociologist could not content himself with the equivalent of house-breaking.

Many things were calculated to direct the attention of such an inquirer to the Middle Ages. The Guilds themselves, which, as we have seen, were occupying

his mind, were characteristic mediaeval institutions. More potent than that, however, was the effect that his work as an architect would inevitably lead him to study what was one of the world's greatest building eras. York Minster, which he was able to inspect at leisure, could not but suggest the kind of society out of which it arose.

Today we see these masterpieces of the architect's and builder's craft rising in isolated splendor out of a wilderness of modern jerry-built structures and we fail to realize in what an organic relation they stood to the whole life of the age which erected them; a cathedral was but the towering climax of the city from which it rose. More than that: the cathedral could be said to symbolize in its ordered beauty the very genius of those times. It is from the architectural point of view that the Middle Ages are best approached. That is why a work like Henry Adams's *Mont St. Michel and Chartres* is so successful in enabling us to enter into their spirit. Even the thought of those times has an architectural quality; a well-known French critic has aptly likened St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* to a cathedral and the same character has been observed in Dante's *Commedia.*

We are more concerned here, however, with the social structure of mediaeval civilization. That structure was architectural in its quality. We cannot of course speak of it as a static thing; changes were going on all the time during which feudalism was in dissolution. Nevertheless, it remains true that society in the Middle Ages rested on certain definite principles and conformed to a general pattern in which priest, prince, knight, merchant, and peasant had their ap-

pointed places. It was a functional society and its members were ranged in order according to the dignity of the function they exercised, and not, as in the modern plutocratic community, according to their wealth. And the whole was linked together by the interplay of mutual responsibilities and privileges. The total impression was that of a wisely and beautifully proportioned building. That helps us to understand how his own particular craft, in the exercise of which he had been frustrated, turned Penty's mind to the structure of mediaeval society and furnished him with the means of appreciating it. In fact, we may say that it is this which gives us the key to his subsequent career.

I know of no writer who could so well hold together in his mind the organic character of the mediaeval commonwealth. His survey of it was not only comprehensive but enabled one to realize its essential orderliness. One of the difficulties in dealing with his work is that it is so many-sided, touching every phase of the subject. Yet this complex whole he saw as something which could be explained in the terms of a few fundamental principles. The secret which gave him this ability is to be found in a passage the importance of which he evidently realized for he repeated it in more than one book. Here it is:

> Thus, we see that the solution of the social problem, as indeed of every other problem in this universe, resolves itself finally into one of order. Take issues in their natural order and everything will straighten itself out beautifully. All the minor details or secondary parts will fall into their proper places. But approach these same issues in a wrong order and confusion results. No subsequent adjustments

can remedy the initial error. This principle is universally true. It is as true of writing a book or of designing a building, as of conducting a revolution. The secret of success in each case will be found finally to rest upon the perception of the order in which the various issues should be taken.

In an article contributed to *The New Age* he described our modern confusion as "the upside-down problem". "Fundamentally," he declared, "this reversal of the natural order of things is due to the decay of all our traditions. Were religion, art, and philosophy firmly established in society and social arrangements orderly, each man would arrive at his proper station in life as a matter of course."

In the Marxian materialistic intrepretation of history he saw this reversal of values in its extreme form. It was the exact opposite of that on which mediaeval society had been based, and could be best refuted by rewriting history – or at least English history – from the standpoint of the Middle Ages. This, as he said, would give the spiritual its true place. It was this consideration which led to the writing of *The Guildsman's Interpretation of History*. The same idea reappeared in *Communism and the Alternative*. "Chrstianity," he wrote in this last-named book, "because it takes its stand on the spiritual nature of man, is the only principle capable of challenging the root assumptions of materialist Communism. . . . In consequence it will not be until those who are opposed to Communism take their stand as unequivocally upon the principles of Christianity as Communists do upon those of materialism that a force will be set in motion capable of successfully challenging it and restoring

the lost equilibrium between the spiritual and material sides of life."

It was his appreciation of the spiritual factor in industry which made Penty so enthusiastic an exponent of the Guild idea. The standard of the Guild was a qualitative and not a quantitative one. It associated men together according to their social function under the auspices of the Church in order that they might be enabled to perform that function according to right reason. His discovery (it was no less) of the fact that the Guild existed for the maintenance of the Just Price illuminated the whole subject, showing clearly that the fundamental motive of the Guild was, not profit, but equity. There followed the conclusion that, since the Guild existed in order to maintain the Just Price, it must possess a monopoly of the particular function it exercised, and this ruled out Free Trade. The nineteenth century had made a fetish of Free Trade. Symbolizing, as it was supposed to do, international cooperation, it appealed to the moral instincts. Not the least important of the many controversies in which Penty engaged was that which raged around this question. But he had no difficulty in showing that it was national self-sufficiency which alone could give the spiritual and moral elements in industry and commerce a chance and that the contrary policy led to profiteering and war. Thus from his study of the mediaeval Guild he was able to point out the flaw in modern economics.

It was the same recognition of the moral aspect of social questions which led him to detect the significance, as regards the break-up of mediaeval society, of the revival of Roman Law. I consider this

one of his most valuable contributions to the discussion of the question and it has been recognized as such by those who have authority to speak. Roman Law perpetuated the tradition of an autocratic empire dependent on slave labor and it was designed to "enable rich men to live among poor". Putting might before right, and order before justice, it lent itself to the designs of the new moneyed class, the advent of which in the fourteenth century heralded the great change that was to inaugurate the capitalistic era. Mediaeval society, established ultimately on Canon Law, had been intended to enable "good men to live among bad", but the revival of Roman Law reversed this and legalized the ethics of Mammon. The peasants of the 1381 rising, even if their methods were brutal, showed a true instinct when they killed the lawyers and burnt their manor rolls. Such was the conclusion to which came this acute student of the Middle Ages.

But if, according to his vision, the spiritual element constituted the roof of the social structure, agriculture must be its base. This followed of course from an examination of mediaeval society; it was also the corollary of his findings regarding international commerce. The self-sufficient nation must be able to feed itself. But it was more than a case of expediency. It was here that the realist showed himself again, for the primacy of agriculture is in the nature of things. It has special application to Great Britain which today finds its previous monopoly of manufactures challenged by other countries, but, apart from that special circumstance, the principle has universal validity. Supernatural and natural – these are

the two extremes between which society moves and they are represented respectively by the priest and the peasant. In between are to be found the craftsman and the merchant representing the artificer and distributor dealing, so to speak, with the raw material supplied by the minister of God and the minister of the soil. To be complete and rightly stabilized, a society needs all these in true proportions. During his later years Penty came to lay more and more stress on this. In conjunction with a technical authority he wrote *Agriculture and the Unemployed* and devoted much time to the Rural Reconstruction Committee whose policy he did much to direct. Just as he had made a convert of Orage in connection with the Guild idea, so did he greatly influence Montague Fordham, the moving spirit of the R.R.C.

The impression might be given that Penty was one of those planners who, at the beginning of this century, were so prolific with schemes of social reconstruction. This would be to some extent true, since he was for a while intimately associated with the Fabians, among whom Beatrice and Sidney Webb were prominent and whose prophet was Bernard Shaw. Fabianism however proved to be nothing less than an attempt at social mechanics. Its ideal was not a living organism composed of men and women, but a machine working with clock-like precision and directing robots. The realization of its purpose would have created an all-powerful bureaucracy and strangled the soul of its victims in red tape. Now an architect is not an engineer. He has to do something more than see that the buildings he designs are satisfactory from the utilitarian standpoint. The edifice must be

a creation, not merely a construction. There is deep significance in the way Penty brought his artistic sense to bear upon the sociological problems with which he was faced. In the unpublished book to which reference has been made there is a description of the process which is worth quoting. Speaking of the connection of the Guild idea with architecture, he wrote:

To such an extent was this the case that Guild theory was built on a framework of architectural theory. Architecture was the microcosm. Realizing that the interests of architecture could not be reconciled with those of Collectivism, that is, with bureaucratic organization, it became necessary to find a system of organization that was not in conflict. The result was that my sociological thought came to be a projection of my architectural thought, or, to be more correct, the equivalents of the ideas associated with the architectural revival. If I wanted to know whether any sociological or economic idea was true or not I asked myself the question, "What would be its reactions upon architecture?" If it would lead to the production of good architecture I assumed it was true; if to bad then I assumed it was false. Thus architecture became the standard by which I tested the validity of the age; an attitude, it is to be observed, the exact opposite to that of the Modernists who, realizing that architecture has come into collision with the age, demand that it shall surrender to it instead of that society be reconstructed upon principles which accord with the eternal truth in architecture . . . I was encouraged in this attitude by Aristotle who in the *Politics* says "the qualities required by the lawgiver are identical with those required by an architect".

The application of this test to Fabians revealed a

Philistinism that augured ill for the validity of their schemes. The story of how Penty's suspicions were awakened and confirmed must be told in his own words. The following is quoted from the same source as the passages cited above.

Though the idea of restoring the Guilds [we read] had from the time I first made its acquaintance a natural appeal for me, something more than an academic interest was needed to make me work for it; and that something was supplied by a conversation I had with the then secretary of the Fabian Society, Mr. E. R. Pease, one day in July, 1902, which "got my goat" as they say in the vernacular. The new building of the School of Economics in Clare Market had just been completed, and as the scheme had been promoted by Mr. Sidney Webb the Fabians surveyed it with a sense of possession. "What do you think of our new building?" said Mr. Pease to me. Knowing it to be a piece of very incompetent architecture I hesitated for a moment, wondering what to say, for I wanted to let him down as gently as possible. But Mr. Pease had no intention of being let down gently. He did not wait for me to reply, but went on, "I suppose you are thinking about architecture. Well, we didn't take much trouble about that. We got our architect through a competition which we decided on the statistical method." "What!" I exclaimed. "Well," he continued, "we invited three architects to compete. Dr. Garnett and I measured up the floor areas of each of the designs, and we selected the one with the greatest area in the class rooms."

That did it; it got me on the raw. It was a bad start for the School of Economics. I had been attracted to Socialism by the writings of William Morris and I had somehow managed to persuade myself that the Socialism of Morris and that of the Fabian Society had something

in common. But any illusions I might have were now entirely dispelled. . . . I saw Fabianism as it was, naked, empty, ugly, complacent, and arrogant; its ideal could be defined as efficient emptiness.

A little further on we have an account of the writer's encounter with Bernard Shaw:

A few weeks before I had met Mr. Shaw and he flaunted his Philistinism before me. I was introduced to him as an architect; and without more ado, without inquiring what I thought or seeking to ascertain where I stood, he proceeded to give me a lecture on architecture just as if I had been a boy of seven. He talked perfect nonsense. Every word he said betrayed his ignorance of the subject, which was so profound that it never apparently had occurred to him that he had anything to learn, and that, in the company of someone who at any rate had studied the subject, his time might be more profitably spent in seeking to learn than in airing his own irresponsible opinions.

Thus we see the architect as sociologist true to his native genius. He takes the laws of his craft — one of the most fundamental and universal of all crafts — as a guide in the rebuilding of society. His knowledge of building enables him to appreciate the structural character of mediaeval civilization. With that model before his eyes he is able to design a type of society which is not based on temporary expediency but on abiding principles. It must have a supernatural roofing, a firm footing on the soil, and in its proportions it must bear witness to the creative artistry and human feeling of its makers.

One of the commonest criticisms heard with respect to the man concerning whom this is written is that

his "mediaevalism", excellent as it may have been in its time, is inapplicable to the world of today. His answer to that was simple. In the first place, the civilization of the Middle Ages in its essentials was not merely a type of civilization; it was Civilization in a universal sense. It exhibited those Christian social principles which are for all time. The idea that progress is to be achieved by getting away from the past is a grotesque error. We can advance only as we respect the traditions of an age happily free from the perversities of the present. In the second place, if we find mechanism and economic liberalism rooted in our institutions and defying us to change our course, they must be challenged. The pride of the modernist must learn the wisdom of repenting before it is too late. If by "reaction" is meant acknowledging our mistakes and getting back to the point in our pilgrimage where we missed the narrow way, then, however great the humiliation, we must be "reactionaries". To pursue the wrong road, knowing it to be the wrong road, merely for the sake of consistency argues a stupid obstinacy.

The best answer to the critics who dismissed Penty as a "mediaevalist", supposing that term closed the case against him, is that it was in the mediaeval system he found the solution for our modern difficulties. It was not as a romantic vision that he saw the society of the Middle Ages but as a practical working model of what a Christian social order should be which could be translated without essential loss into the terms of today. It was in fact the practical sanity and universal validity of the mediaeval philosophy and sociology which, to his mind, were their recommendations. The really impractical visionaries were those

doctrinaire liberals who, in spite of the fact that the type of civilization they had advocated was everywhere breaking down, still clung to their formulas. Nor was it for Socialists, ignoring the patent facts of human nature and bent on destroying the traditional institutions based on those facts, to cavil at an idealism that was rooted in history. It was just the sanity of the Middle Ages which recommended them to Penty. He was on architect whose work had to bear the test of use, not a builder of castles in the air, and the practicality he had learned in his profession he carried over into his sociology. If he needs further vindication it can be found in the fact that a bankrupt world is slowly turning to those mediaeval ideas which it had repudiated. We are learning to distrust that "unregulated use of currency". Free Trade has been found out. The parliamentarianism of the liberal régime has been jettisoned by one nation after another. The corporative state has revived the guild idea. And while the Communistic alternative to nineteenth-century liberalism is increasingly revealing its inherent impracticability, those peoples which have revived and adapted to modern conditions the traditions of mediaeval Christendom are seen to be the only constructive builders in a confused age.

An acquaintance extending over several years with the subject of this article has left on the mind of the writer a dominating impression of moral and intellectual sanity supported by a robust independence. Arthur J. Penty's independence of mind was remarkable. It was not achieved by ignoring those who held other views, for he was never afraid to test his own conclusions in controversy. He allowed the theoretical

structure he had erected to be shaken in the storms of controversy in order that what was unshakable might remain. It was not an obstinate consistency which he showed but one which had subjected itself to experience and reason. That he should have won over to his way of thinking so powerful a mind as that of A. R. Orage and that he should have had from G. K. Chesterton the tribute of being "one of the most interesting of living men" indicated the impression he made on his contemporaries.

What I have called his "moral sanity" was as conspicuous as his intellectual balance. The latter in fact was derived from the former. He owed his instinct for truth to an innate wholesomeness and honesty. There is a sense in which he retained throughout life the unsophisticated simplicity of a child. The ordinary worldly motives played no part in his life. "Sneaking submission can always live," said Blake. Penty preferred a comparative obscurity to the surrender of ideals. This spiritual integrity enabled him to detect shams even when disguised in the most plausible form and supported by the most influential names. I have used the term "wholesome" and I want that to be understood in its literal meaning. It indicates his wholeness, as I will call it, that he could never isolate a subject from its context and treat it in the manner of the specialist. As he saw the connection of social theory and practice with architecture, so, when he came to deal with economics, did he see the bearing on the subject of religion, ethics, and aesthetics. That is why, when I think of him, it is not of the contributor to The American Review, *The Criterion*, *The New Age*, and other leading organs, nor even of the

architect who came to be an acknowledged authority in his profession, but of Penty the man. The short, thickset figure, workmanlike in its compactness, the round head and open face, and the vehement speech checked by a slight stutter, occasioned perhaps by the very eagerness with which he sought to express himself – these things stand in my mind as the indices of a personality remarkable for its integrity and to be valued far more than his contemporaries realized for the spiritual insight which enabled him to detect the lies and steer through the confusions of his time.

Reading at Random

Dorothea Brande Collins

The minor novels of the past season have shown more variety, and more competence, than for some years past. We have been spared, so far this year, one of those dull, pretentious, huge, and long-winded books which so often run away with the sales and the readers' attention, and have, by a good bargain, seen them replaced by shorter, more vigorous, and considerably more entertaining works of fiction. Here are some notes, on truly random reading, in which acerbity – except that reserved for one glaring example of he-man sentimentality – is, praise heaven! almost uncalled-for.

Two of the books, *The Island of Green Myrtles* and *The Late George Apley*, lift themselves by their virtues quite out of the "minor" class.

*Sea of Grass** is a "pioneer novel" of such mixed elements that an estimate is difficult.

However one may dislike the invidious comparison, this book is so similar in tone and in theme to Miss Cather's *A Lost Lady* that not to take cognizance of the similarity would be disingenuous. Not only does the action take place at about the same period of this country's history, but its heroine is another of those fair, frail, and glamorous women that Miss Cather was, if not the first, the most expert at capturing for our delight and pity. The ranch and not the railroad is the background, but Judge Brewton is, again, one of the titans of private enterprise who were fated to rise and

* SEA OF GRASS *by Conrad Richter* (knopf. 149 pp. $1.25).

fall within that period of one generation. There is in each book the flashier, superficially more sophisticated lover. In each the narrative is given by a young boy on the circumference of the story's action. Miss Cather's Lady is glimpsed at the end far away from the crude town she could no longer bear; Mr. Richter's Lutie Brewton comes back to her abandoned husband at the death of her second son, who was not the judge's son but her child by her caddish lover, but the parallel remains obvious.

The greatest excellence the book has is the picture of Judge Brewton in his changing world. From being undisputed lord of his thousands of acres of grass, the good tyrant who makes his own laws and keeps his own stern order, he falls before the encroaching wave of the second-comers, the "nesters" – "these people who had waited till the West was safe and the pioneering done" and who were "barking and snapping around my uncle's legs like a pack of dogs". His wife's careerist lover throws his lot in with the new people, knowing they are inferior, so that her defection, although she never more than half understands her husband or the life to which he has brought her, is doubly treacherous. But the Titan is a giant even in his decline, magnanimous and terrible. The order that he typifies, Mr. Richter seems to say, although doomed to pass, was a great one; we have not seen its equal since.

The figure of Judge Brewton remains when the novel is finished. Nevertheless the book is imperfect and derivative. Whether or not it derives directly from *A Lost Lady* – and it may easily be that it did not, but that similar dramatic situations, occurring in-

dependently to their authors, demanded similar treatments – it too often smells of affectation and the lamp. Here are a few tortured sentences which, to my mind, give the book away, for all its apparent admiration of the primitive:

But there was something unforgettable in the slender way she stood there.

And I realized that here was a finer-fibered creature than any my long black hair and rope-calloused hands had known.

. . . Wherever she was, the sensitive white hand of Lutie Brewton felt humiliated, dishonored, and crushed like its glove on the shelf. . . .

Even without eyes or ears I would have known her. She hugged me in that silent integral part of speech of several generations ago which told things the lips neither would nor could.

*Suns Go Down** has a fresh note, although it is less expertly written and less finished than a reading of its reviews might lead one to expect. It is not, strictly speaking, a novel, but a sort of memorial to Mr. Flannery Lewis's grandmother, who is still living at ninety, and to ugly Virginia City, Nevada, to which she went as a bride of barely sixteen. "She would insist the marriage was in no way an elopement, either," writes her grandson. "She had simply, as she said, gone away with her husband of the day before, on a ship for San Francisco, without letting anyone know she was leaving." Such a rejection of the dramatic is characteristic; Mrs. Flannery had no use for the excessive in speech or in life, and – after years spent in her company as a

* SUNS GO DOWN *by Flannery Lewis* (MACMILLAN. 226 pp. $2.00).

child and boy and young man – her grandson even today can only guess what her true opinion must be of some of the greatest matters of life. She is "enthusiastic about marriage and thinks there is something to be said for love. The use of love in life has been overdone, of course. One doesn't have a husband sent down from heaven. Love comes from admiration and respect and sympathy. Grandmother will admit there are some people who are emotionally immature and there's no accounting for their love. But as a rule one can depend upon love." Education, on the other hand, or at least what was called education in Virginia City, she scorned. Many of "Grandmother's" opinions do get into the book – of architecture, of writers and writing, of laws and lawlessness; and, even at one remove, these are pungent and sensible, with more of the eighteenth than the nineteenth century about them.

Her husband was fatally burned in a mine explosion while she was still a young woman; she struggled to raise and educate her children and then outlived them. Her own suffering did not turn her to religion, although in her latter years she took to reading the Bible for pleasure. She saw the good decline and the wicked flourish; she was a most literal-minded woman, and her grandson feels that the conclusions she must have come to about God, the Hereafter, punishment and reward might have been called heretical if she had not been so quiet about holding them.

Whatever her circumstances, she was always undaunted, responsible, and courageous. Mr. Lewis tells his memories of her with a kind of humorous despair for his inability to convey by any words the true essence of "Grandmother". It is perhaps this undernote

of loving laughter which makes the book so winning, and accounts for its appeal to readers of widely varied types. But a great many reviewers' comments about "pioneers" and "frontier women" will certainly have earned the heroine's scorn (if she has seen them), and probably that of her commemorator, grateful as he may be for the kind intentions behind such misrepresentation. It was because Grandmother Flannery was so unlike the average pioneer, man or woman, so unromantic, so little given to self-dramatization, that she is a figure worth preserving.

Quite incidentally the ugly, violent life of Virginia City does emerge from the pages Mr. Lewis writes, and serves to set off in even more striking fashion the upright figure of the little convent-bred woman who lived seventy-three years in a town she hated simply because her "lines were laid" there.

As for *Of Mice and Men** – surely no more sentimental wallowing ever passed for a novel, or had such a welcome, as this sad tale of a huge half-wit and his cowboy protector! Mr. Steinbeck this time wrings the Tears of Things from a ten-gallon hat, and reviewers who cannot bear the mawkishness of a Milne, the crudity of a Coward, or the mysticism of a Morgan were able to take the sorrowful symmetries of a Steinbeck to their hearts and write their reviews with tears running down their cheeks.

Who does not know by this time of Lennie, who loved to stroke soft furry things, but didn't know his own strength? Of Slim, with the "God-like eyes",

* OF MICE AND MEN *by John Steinbeck* (COVICI-FRIEDE. 186 pp. $2.00).

knight *sans peur et sans reproche* of the bunkhouse? Of George, who loved Lennie well enough to shoot him? Of "Curley's wife", that wax-dummy girl who might have come straight out of the window of a chain dress-shop, so glossy, so hard, so brightly painted — and so far from ever having drawn a breath?

Mr. Steinbeck is "economical". He is, indeed. That is perhaps the secret of his charm. I feel sure that all those reviewers who cheered so hard for *Of Mice and Men* would, if they could have been caught while still sobbing over George and Lennie, have admitted that even critics are only boys at heart, for that is just the mood that Mr. Steinbeck's work induces. So perhaps, again, they would admit that the secret of his success is that a certain simple type of reader feels, when he discovers that he has foreseen correctly any movement of a story, a kind of participation in the creative act of the author. Almost any critic would admit this if the book under consideration were one of the Tarzan books, or a book by Lloyd Douglas, or any one of a dozen "popular novelists" of the sort they affect to despise, but perhaps they have not noticed that the symmetry and expectedness (or, if you prefer, read "economy") of Mr. Steinbeck's work put the average pulp-writer to shame.

If Lennie kills a mouse by stroking it, you may be sure he will unintentionally kill something larger in the same way; when you hear of Curley's wife's soft hair, "like fur", you can begin to cooperate with the author by expectation of her end. When George learns that a poor old worthless smelly dog can be dispatched easily by a shot in the back of his head, you are unwarrantably guileless if you do not suspect the manner

in which Lennie will meet his death. If an old man dreams of a home, peace, and security, you may be sure that a home, peace, and security are what he will most agonizingly just miss. And so forth. You can call this sort of foreshadowing "economy" if it pleases you; but if "economy" is the word you choose you should abandon the word "obvious" hereafter and forever.

It may be some time before the current vogue for Steinbeck passes. Masculine sentimentality, particularly when it masquerades as toughness, is a little longer in being seen through than the feminine or the inclusively human variety. Undoubtedly there are plenty who would deny, even today, that *The Sun Also Rises* and *What Price Glory?* are (although far more distinguished) prototypes of *Of Mice and Men.* Surely it should not be too hard to find the soft spots where the decay shows: the romantic overestimation of the rôle of friendship, the wax-figure women, bright, hard, treacherous, unreal — whether a Lady Brett, the French girl behind the lines, or "Curley's wife", these are all essentially hateful women, women from whom it is a virtue to flee to masculine companionship. There was certainly a sort of stag-party hysteria and uproar about the approval we have been hearing for this padded short story about underdogs and animals, bunkhouses and bathos, which has seldom risen so high since "Wait for baby!" soared over the footlights. . . . Ah, I was forgetting Mr. Chips.

*Action for Slander** is by an old hand at the novel-writing game, and its effectiveness comes largely from

* ACTION FOR SLANDER *by Mary Borden* (HARPERS. 304 pp. $2.50).

her excellent use of the materials she has chosen. It is the story of a man who goes to law after – too long after – he has been charged with cheating at cards. The contrast between the ponderous processes of the law and the elusive, intangible nature of the harm done to a life by whispering malice is dramatic. Mrs. Borden has known how to increase the suspense skillfully: by holding her hero inactive through chivalry, self-doubt, and pride till the charge against him is all but proved in the minds of his acquaintances, and of the strangers who learn of the affair. She shows well his pain, exasperation, savage impatience as he begins to feel the marshalling of the army of whispers against his character. A final scene in the courtroom, where gross lying defeats itself by its own insolence and carelessness, is very nearly overdone. In any case, the concluding dramatic action is too slight to balance the pages which have led up to it. The same novelist's gift which helped the author to dramatize subtle and difficult material effectively has somewhat overreached itself, and brought her to treat at too great a length and in far too much detail the separate items in Major Deviot's discomfiture. And, finally, a grain more evidence that the author herself felt that the orginal situation had come about from a partial disintegration of the hero's character through his acceptance of the unexigent morals and standards of his circle would have strengthened the story.

Such evidence, refreshingly, is never far to seek in the work of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes,* whose ability to

* THE CHINK IN THE ARMOUR *by Marie Belloc Lowndes* (LONGMANS, GREEN. 312 pp. $2.00).

show and underline the character-flaw in her creatures which leads them into peril and, often, to death is largely responsible for the uncannily convincing effect she has on her readers. "There, but for the grace of God —" one thinks, again and again, as she holds up her hero or heroine and shows, deftly but unwaveringly, the touch of rot on the will, the spot of lax good-nature, the sick ambition, the soft lasciviousness, which, opening the door to evil, makes each victim cooperate in his own danger or downfall. No living writer does this so adroitly, and that her work is unflaggingly popular both here and in England is one of the few reassuring indications of the essential soundness of the reading public today.

The Chink in the Armour appeared first many years ago. Longmans, moved by a petition sent by Ernest Hemingway, Alexander Woollcott, and Edmund Pearson, have just reissued it. It is as moving, fresh, terrifying, and enchanting as ever. In her mystery stories Mrs. Lowndes seems to go back to an earlier meaning for "mystery" than our superficial use of the word today connotes, and, time and again, writes us an Everyman or an Everywoman under the guise of a thriller. To give away a word of what happens to the pretty, idle young English widow at the Villa des Muguets would be treason in the ranks of the Lowndesites, but this is, in my opinion, high among her best books.

*Hero Breed** arrived with a fanfare of praise from its English publication, a fanfare more mystifying than usual, for Mr. Mullen is a writer so inept and wooden

* HERO BREED *by Pat Mullen* (MC BRIDE. 423 pp. $2.50).

that reading his pages is a considerable task, and only the fact that he brings news about the Aran Islands and the west coast of Ireland, which Robert Flaherty's recent picture, *Man of Aran*, served to bring to life for the movie-going public, can possibly account for its popularity. The story limps and jerks; the writing is just above illiterate, yet there is an iota of justification for the praise it received in the impressions which do emerge, in spite of all, of life in a land which commerce and corruption have hardly entered. The battles for a livelihood with sea and land, the episodes of neighborliness and rivalry which give savor to the book do somewhat overshadow the triteness of its love story. But it is unfortunate that sheer awkward bad writing should be mistaken by critics as evidence of — to quote the reviewers — "terrific vitality", "a strong wind", "a strong fresh wind", "the exhilarating impact of a sea wind"; as "racy", "fresh", "unspoiled", and "splendidly alive".

Juan in America was excellent satire under the guise of a picaresque story about a lineal descendent of the original and only Don Juan. *Juan in China*,* unhappily, is not near so good. America just before the depression offered Mr. Linklater an embarrassment of rich flowers for his nosegay of absurdities; we were just enough like the English for our unlikenesses to strike the author with hilarious force. China is too vivid and strange; Juan shows up against that background as rather dull himself, and only "Mr. Hikohoki", a Japanese gentleman who turns up on every occasion in as

* JUAN IN CHINA *by Eric Linklater* (FARRAR & RINEHART. 298 pp. $2.50).

many different forms as Proteus, but who invariably emerges victor in each encounter, is really as richly comic as was almost every character in the earlier book. Juan flits only once, from his Chinese mistress to an author of travel books, who, disappointingly, then does such flitting as there is to follow. This scarcity of amorous episodes is, perhaps, a moral improvement, but it makes for less entertainment than Juan's earlier manner; and for Juan to be *deserted* — well, let him give up his ancestral claims!

I missed Shirley Watkins's first novel, but it is safe to say, now I have read *The Island of Green Myrtles*,* that I will not willingly miss any others she may write. This study of the disintegration of a man in the hands of the coldly voluptuous, prosaic, but beautiful mother of the boy he is engaged to tutor has an excellence that is almost anachronistic. Miss Watkins writes with a sort of eighteenth-century detachment; she has a clear, unforced style of great distinction. When she cares to comment on her creatures, she comments. She never throws her reader into the kind of identification with her characters which is one of the most marked weaknesses of contemporary writing, and so, since she has been alert to keep her detachment unimpaired, her comments are not obtrusive but suitable and welcome.

It is difficult to believe that such a paragon as Miss Watkins is actually living among us; that this book was not written in a healthier age and kept, somehow, for our own. The central character of her book had

* THE ISLAND OF GREEN MYRTLES *by Shirley Watkins* (MACRAE-SMITH. 293 pp. $2.50).

been training for the ministry. When he abandons it, seduced first by luxury and material ease, then bound ever closer and closer to his own self-indulgence through his fever of desire for the cold, monstrous, but utterly believable heroine, Miss Watkins actually forbears to hint that it was religion which made him a hypocrite, and that his individual failure was in some fashion at the same time an earnest of the insufficiency and impracticability of religion. Indeed, she says in so many words that Houghton declined through a weakness of his will. The relief of finding such scrupulous discrimination in a modern book would excuse any overestimation of the book. But the soberest estimate, I should think, must place this novel head and shoulders about the most of the output of the past ten years. It is not everyone's book; it is for readers who prefer to enjoy with the mind rather than with the emotions.

*The Late George Apley** should, one might think, make those who went mad with appreciation of Mr. Santayana's prosy, amorphous, and pretentious portrait of a Bostonian in *The Last Puritan* feel a little sheepish. In a third of the space, without laboring his points one-half so heavily, Mr. Marquand has done us a picture of a Bostonian that is perfect to its last detail. The character-work is glorious: Boston male and female, Brahmin and toady, Puritans and Irish, young and old, Mr. Marquand has them all down to the life. In the disguise and labored style of a minor

* THE LATE GEORGE APLEY: A NOVEL IN THE FORM OF A MEMOIR *by J. P. Marquand* (LITTLE, BROWN. 354 pp. $2.50).

man of letters undertaking to write the life of a friend whom he admired to idolatry, Mr. Marquand manages to be most hilariously funny. All the dreadful little jokes of the pious biographer, the samples of "wit" which was never very funny at best and has been mangled by the inept scribe till its rhythm and point are quite lost, the fulsome praise coming just at the moment it can best hold up the drive of the story — every ineptitude of an amateur man of letters has been reproduced and is made to serve Mr. Marquand's wicked and delightful purpose.

More adroit still, from the mass of details about the tiresome, good, stupid, self-important, wounded, and gallant old fuss-budget, there does emerge at last a picture of a man better than the mold of his life would let him show. All but omnipotent yet hen-pecked, warm-hearted but fearful of exploitation, generous but with such miserly airs that he is seldom appreciated, George Apley's name, in New England, is legion. No sadder but funnier tale was ever told than that of the way George Apley's Pequod Island, which he had hoped "would be a haven for men", is turned into a kind of exclusive Chautauqua-cum-training-camp when his sister and wife discover that "Pequod Island appealed to them also, and to them we owe much of the routine and tradition which still exist there today". Those ghastly summer resorts the New Englanders make for themselves wherever they go, with early rising and ugly clothes, and "divergent but congenial personalities, so that there is always good talk and stimulating thought" on a thousand Pequod Islands!

No one would ask a dog to suffer as Mr. Marquand

must have suffered for years while, probably quite unknown to himself, he was gathering the material for *The Late George Apley*, but we would not have missed the book for anything. I hope the author is New Englander enough still to kindle at the thought that he suffered for our common good. Occasionally he "savages" – remembers with hatred too acute some dreadful item of the past, and then, and only then, his satire overshoots its mark.

I confess I do not always see eye to eye with Mr. Marquand. Often when he is at his most amusing, many readers will still prefer the standards he is sniping at rather more than those by which, he implies, they should be replaced. But for his relenting to George Apley he may be forgiven much. I rather suspect the forgiveness grew upon him as he wrote.

REVIEWS

War in Abyssinia*

TWO RECENT events in international affairs have shown how closely world opinion comes to falling into two camps, outside of which there is room only for indecision. The Italian annexation of Abyssinia moved British imperialists, international Communists, pacifists, and liberal democrats to sing in chorus; protesting their love of sweetness and light, they hymned their hate of Fascism. The present civil war in Spain finds the same groups united in a single choir, and once more Fascism is the burden of their song, and the goal of their Russian bullets. The popular press and the intellectual weeklies have made the picture clear and definite: on one side stands the Fascist monster, usually garbed in the panoply of Mars, and on the other side stands Democracy, whose dress varies from a liberty cap decorated with hammer and sickle to the featureless nudity of a Platonic ideal.

When the average citizen of our capitalist democracies looks into his daily paper for explanations of why whole peoples should choose to dwell in the hideous camp of the right, he usually finds that they have been tricked into it by promises of a new Utopia, or that they are suffering from mass hypnotism, or that they have read too much Spengler. As for the camp of the left, it is treated as the normal place to

* WAUGH IN ABYSSINIA *by Evelyn Waugh* (LONGMANS, GREEN. 253 pp. $2.50).

be, and the average citizen barely gathers from his paper that there is any unity on that side at all, for it is made to seem that so many different groups are opposed to Fascism only because Fascism would encroach on so much. Thus, in the case of Germany, all lovers of religious freedom are urged to band together against state totalitarianism; while, in the case of Spain, the lovers of irreligious freedom are urged to fight the bloody depredations of the Roman Church, long noted as an instrument of oppression; but in each case it is Fascism that is being fought.

The unanimity of the leftist camp was most evident in the world-wide protest raised against the Italian venture in Abyssinia. In it were united the sporting English officer, who wrote to his favorite paper that it wasn't cricket of the Italians to use the instruments of modern warfare against a primitive people like the Abyssinians (it is true that he did not suggest, as an alternative, hunting them like foxes), and the bloodthirstiest humanitarian of the Third International, who hoped for a new world war and, later, the beginning of a classless society, but wrote to his paper only that the dignity of the League should be upheld. The editors of *The Living Church* and *The New Republic* were as one in condemning Mussolini as a megalomaniac who would stop at nothing in his pursuit of glory, and the aristocratic Mr. Eden joined Comrade Litvinoff (who is said to have once been a corset salesman in the East End) in agreeing that Italy must be starved back into its senses. In this vast chorus the humanitarian note was the strongest: the motorized army of Il Duce carried nothing but hardship and oppression for the subjects of Haile Selassie; the last

free black people in Africa were being gassed and bombed into slavery.

While the Geneva diplomats gathered either to prevent this enslavement or precipitate a full-scale European war, an army of newspaper correspondents, apparently only slightly less in number than the Italian legions, descended on the capital of Ethiopia, instructed to gather for the public in the Western democracies the details of another Fascist outrage. Amongst these correspondents was Evelyn Waugh, the novelist and hagiographer, who, as he remarks in *Waugh in Abyssinia*, qualified as an expert on the African empire because he "had actually spent a few weeks in Abyssinia itself, and had read the dozen or so books which constitute the entire English bibliography of the subject". And, to judge from Mr. Waugh's account of journalistic activities in Abyssinia, he had a further advantage over his fellows in that he had shown himself, in *Black Mischief*, capable of writing fiction with an Abyssinian background.

His first chapter Mr. Waugh calls "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to the Ethiopian Question", and in it reviews the recent history of the country and the events that led up to the Italian decision to take over the last of free Africa. The Ethiopian ruling class he shows to have been numerically small, a race of warriors who imposed their rule upon a diverse collection of African peoples. The Empire itself, at least so far as its territory extended two years ago, did not go back to the days of Prester John, but was acquired by conquest during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, reaching its full expansion at the time of the World War. The genesis of the Ethiopian difference with

Italy Mr. Waugh finds in the nature of the people themselves: cunning, treacherous, and insolent. By cunning and treachery they had met the same qualities in European imperialists, and they had come off the victors, but not so much because they were superior as because no European nation was particularly anxious to dominate their country.

Out of their victory in these encounters the Abyssinian's natural insolence took added strength and, clashing with the new national pride of the Italians, resulted in the "incidents" which brought on the Italian invasion. With Adowa in their memories, the rank and file of the Abyssinian warriors were spoiling for a fight, but Haile Selassie, though supreme head of a warrior caste, seems to have relied on the League of Nations' activities to preserve his kingdom for him. In Mr. Waugh's opinion, Selassie was less the simple savage king whose trust the white betrayed than the shrewd tyrant who for once played the wrong card. As for the nobility of his character, his flight from his capital with a train-load of bullion is sufficient commentary upon it. Now, his imperial crown exchanged for a bowler hat, his "savings" well invested, and surrounded in Bath by an admiring group of Anglican bishops and enthusiastic D.B.E.'s, he seems as well off as he ever was in Addis Ababa.

Except by implication, Mr. Waugh does not treat of the larger moral question involved in the Italian action; he limits himself almost entirely to what he personally saw and heard. However, he does point out that Italian behavior was not at variance with the normal European line of conduct in African colonial matters, and that England, Italy's chief accuser, had

earlier followed the same policy and differed from her imperialist competitors only in "louder protestations of benevolent intention". (Indeed, as I write, the current *Illustrated London News* shows photographs of the British army proceeding with tanks, airplanes, and field guns against the natives of Waziristan.) To the average Abyssinian and his slave, the "horrors" of Fascism must seem almost the expressions of an unmanly softness of heart. The slave, especially, can have small objection to his new master, for

> the Abyssinians had nothing to give their subject peoples, nothing to teach them. They brought no crafts or knowledge, no new system of agriculture, drainage, or road-making, no medicine or hygiene, no higher political organization, no superiority except in their magazine rifles and belts of cartridges. They built nothing; they squatted in the villages in the thatch huts of the conquered people, dirty, idle, and domineering, burning the timber, devouring the crops, taxing the meager stream of commerce that seeped in from the outside, enslaving the people. . . . The Abyssinians imposed what was, by its nature, a dead and hopeless system.

Addis Ababa Mr. Waugh found, physically, much the same city it had been at the time of Haile Selassie's coronation – dirty, sprawling, and disorganized – but more crowded and, naturally, in a high state of excitement. This excitement was especially productive of rumors, and since none of the correspondents could get to the front and the official news service was considerably short of reliable, truth was as frequent a casualty at the hands of the newspapermen as were Selassie's black-skinned savages at the hands of Il Duce's black-shirted ones. Some fighting Mr. Waugh

did see, but it was only such local brawls as Abyssinian life frequently gave rise to. The Emperor, like any European constitutional monarch, did not go to the front, but kept up the morale of his people by making official visits to the correct places behind the lines. At the American Hospital in Dessye, where he made a call,

> in order to show the equipment of the hospital at its best advantage the doctors staged an operation – the amputation of a gangrened stump of arm. Emperor, Court, and journalists crowded into the theater; the photographers and cinema men took their shots. The Emperor asked, "And where did this gallant man lose his hand?"
>
> "Here in Dessye. The Dedjasmach had it cut off for stealing two besas' worth of corn."

Mr. Waugh travelled about the country to such places as were permitted, sifted rumors, heard of the bombing of Red Cross units but could not honestly cable home the "facts", and "in Europe and America the editors and film magnates had begun to lose patience". In December he received his dismissal from his newspaper and left Abyssinia. In August, when the Italians had completed their occupation of the country, he returned – the first English observer to do so. At Djibouti in French Somaliland, where one takes the railroad for Addis Ababa, the rumors were as thick – in both senses of the word – as they had been at the height of the war. In Addis the riots that followed the flight of the Emperor had resulted in some property damage and the foreign population was nervous over the possibility of raids from the disbanded Ethiopian troops – now taken to banditry – but the children were singing "Giovenezza" for pennies and

their elders did not seem especially impressed by the lack of freedom this implied. Mr. Waugh met Marshal Graziani, a quiet and dignified man, too busy to say much other than that he probably would not have the time to read Mr. Waugh's book.

Outside Addis Ababa the chief sign of the change was the Italians' road-building activities, and this was "a new thing in East Africa . . . white men hard at work on simple manual labor; the portent of a new type of conquest". This new type of conquest, says Mr. Waugh, is "something, indeed, that has not been seen anywhere outside the United States of America for two hundred years". It is not, like much British imperialist expansion, the emigration of a ruling class to find new sources of that wealth on which it establishes its privileges; it is not capitalist exploitation, the sole purpose of which is to return profits to the home nation; it "is the expansion of a race". In Abyssinia at present one may even encounter badly cooked macaroni, as Mr. Waugh admits – and English bishops will doubtless find things they can stomach less well. But, says Mr. Waugh, in a short time "new roads will be radiating to all points of the compass, and along the roads will pass the eagles of ancient Rome, as they came to our savage ancestors in France and Britain and Germany, bringing some rubbish and some mischief; a good deal of vulgar talk and some sharp misfortunes for individual opponents, but above and beyond and entirely predominating, the inestimable gifts of fine workmanship and clear judgment – the two determining qualities of the human spirit, by which alone, under God, man grows and flourishes".

GEOFFREY STONE

Personal Realism*

IN 1920 seven American philosophers published a co-operative volume of essays expounding their realistic views on the problems of epistemology. Calling themselves exponents of Critical Realism, their book was not merely a protest against the ineptitudes of Idealism but a proposed corrective of the naïve theories of the proponents of what was then the New Realism. Those seven thinkers were George Santayana, C. A. Strong, R. W. Sellars, H. A. Lovejoy, Durant Drake, A. K. Rogers, and James Bissett Pratt. In this present book Professor Pratt of Williams now offers an exposition of his "personal and matured views" upon the epistemological problems which were dealt with in the *Essays in Critical Realism.*

Let it be said at the outset that Professor Pratt's effort to clarify his consistent and tentative view of some of the great problems of knowledge and reality is written in the best traditions of American realism. Realism, both in its New and Critical forms, is something more than a reaction against Idealism. Philosophical realism, as championed by American thinkers today, is definitely on the offensive; it endeavors to present a constructive program of metaphysical thinking which compels the acknowledgement that philosophy, after more than three centuries of wandering aimlessly in the desert, is beginning to find the road again. *Est quaedam philosophia perennis.*

The author begins his volume with an exposition of

* PERSONAL REALISM *by James Bissett Pratt* (MACMILLAN. 387 pp. $3.00).

the task of philosophy. Two opposing views of that task are discussed, the rationalistic and the empirical. The former, he says in rejecting it, rests solely upon *a priori* considerations and logical necessity; philosophy is thus envisaged as a kind of cosmic logic, differentiated from science not by content but by method, and the goal which it sets itself is absolute certainty. The empirical view, to which Professor Pratt enthusiastically subscribes, conceives it to be the task of metaphysics to come to what conclusions it can about the total universe; it is interested not merely in logical concepts but also in empirical facts. "These are the things that we human beings are initially sure of." And then we get this unexpected hint of the Aristotelianism which appears sporadically throughout the book:

> It is the task of thought to put together the facts which experience provides, under the guidance of logic, so as to gain a more nearly complete and self-consistent conception of the real world in which our destinies are cast. To put the matter briefly, it is the task of philosophy to explain experience.

Treating the fundamental proposition of his thesis, the author harks back again and again to Aristotle, but his Aristotle is not always the forthright exponent of common sense, the thinker who made the distinction of potency and act, the philosopher who taught the mediaevalists the relation of substance and accident. Professor Pratt indeed asserts that the mediaeval thinkers misinterpreted Aristotle. "The Scholastics who based their thought largely upon Aristotle carried on his views in ways that really modified them;

their tendency was to sharpen the contrast between substance and its attributes to such an extent as to separate them." On this question he claims that "if we are to retain the concept of substance we must free it from the exaggerations of the Scholastics and go back to something like Aristotle's meaning". He tells us that, in his view, a substance is not an essence but an existent, and that we may properly equate *existent thing* with *substance* and say that all existent things are substances and all substances existent things. In our belief, that view is somewhat different from what Aristotle taught.

Similar challenges on the part of the author are to be found in his treatment of the theory of knowledge, in his chapter on existence, and in his discussion of universals. Of the last-named he says: "Universals are not individuals and cannot rightly be said to have any independent existence; they are possible objects of thought." This forthright assertion might have been considerably clarified by a judicious employment of the distinction: *formaliter in intellectu sed fundamentaliter in re*. The criticism is sharpened by a study of the following excerpt wherein the author protests that psychical events – sensa, feelings, thought, experiences of every sort – are all included among the existences which Realism recognizes:

> To attribute to Realism the view that reality, or existence, is to be defined as that which is "independent of mind" is to indulge in a wholly unjustified caricature. Realism is much more sure of mental than of physical existents. Their reality it never thinks of questioning. It is only the material world whose reality needs discussion or defense.

The puzzled reader may well ask whether universals, having been denied existence on page 42, are to be endowed with existence on page 152. Are they not as much mental existents as sensa, feelings, thoughts, and the rest? To philosophers who think in the Aristotelian tradition the concept is an original creation of the human mind, its indigenous fruit, a product of the mind's own activity; it does not exist, *as such*, outside the mind. Therefore it is said to be only formally in the intellect. But, since it is the intelligible result of a cognitional process which had its beginning in a sense-impression, it is said to be fundamentally in the world of things but formally in the world of intellect. Whether it is a one hundred per cent existent in Professor Pratt's sense is not quite clear.

In the second part of the book the author proceeds to discuss the larger issues of his Realism. Here he meets many of the objections which have been launched by Idealists against the philosophical rebels, goes on to discuss the unavoidability of the mind-body problem, carries the war into the camp of the logical positivists, the Materialists, the upholders of Idealistic Parallelism, the sponsors of the Interaction theory, and other opponents of Realism. In his discussion of the will and freedom he justly rejects both indeterminism and physical determinism in favor of what he calls self-determinism. His distinctions here are weakened by his omission to take note of the teaching that the will is never wholly and entirely free; it is always determined, by its very nature, to act in the direction of the good. With that limitation in mind, he might have written this chapter with greater emphasis on his contention that "one's genuinely possible

acts are limited not only by the potentialities of one's body but by one's nature". The book concludes with a chapter on "Ultimate Guesses", wherein the author writes of the Cosmic Self, and of our selves as growing out from the universal life "in somewhat the same mysterious or simple fashion in which buds, in the springtime, grow out from the twigs and branches of the trees".

Despite these criticisms the book is a notable sign of the new day in American philosophical thought. It is marked, of course, by the exaggerated objectivism so characteristic of the Realists. None the less, the fact that the subjectivation of reality is being definitely abandoned in favor of a saner view of the universe gives us hope that American philosophy will yet swing back into the full current of the great tradition that comes to us from the thinker of Stagira.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Hilaire Belloc on England*

AN ESSAY on the Nature of Contemporary England is a welcome addition to the comparatively small number of books – in the whole mass of his work, totalling more than a hundred titles – in which Hilaire Belloc has stopped to expound explicitly the ideas which make up his social philosophy. Primarily, in the form of his writings, an historian and historical biographer, by nature and choice a lifelong champion of his faith, and always a literary artist of abundant genius, Mr. Belloc has seemed to record almost in an incidental

* AN ESSAY ON THE NATURE OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLAND *by Hilaire Belloc* (SHEED & WARD. 91 pp. $1.25).

fashion the observations which have made him one of the most powerful of contemporary political forces: for some, the ablest political thinker of his time.

Most of the theses propounded in this new book will be familiar to students of Mr. Belloc's work. But in bringing them together into a connected essay he may be said to have expressed for the first time his reflections on a subject that has been a constant preoccupation throughout his career: the nature of the people among whom he has chiefly lived and to whom he has directed his work. The resulting fusion of keen personal observation and profound analysis yields a book, brief in compass, which is a masterpiece of political and psychological exposition. In its tone it represents Mr. Belloc at his most objective and non-rhetorical: that cold impersonal manner that seems almost inhuman and verges on the repellent even when it is completely persuasive and illuminating.

An Essay on the Nature of Contemporary England is so close-packed in its presentation that a summary can convey almost nothing of its quality. Mr. Belloc emphasizes three characteristics as the most essential in the composition of the English people: "Modern England is Aristocratic, Protestant, and Commercial." He points out that a living organism cannot be defined by a formula, but finds these three traits the most salient.

In treating England as an aristocratic state Mr. Belloc uses again the analysis that informed his longest previous excursion into pure political theory: that notable book, *The House of Commons and Monarchy*. For him human societies fall into two main divisions throughout history: "egalitarian states", and "non-egalitarian states":

When egalitarian societies are small (and only then) they can be organized as Democracies, that is, societies governing themselves by a meeting of the citizens, public discussion of any change, and the general acceptation of it in such a meeting, the appointment of magistrates in the same fashion. Where you have to deal only with a few thousands (whether of independent workers or of slave-owners), democracy is feasible. Elsewhere democracy is impossible for mere mechanical reasons. Hence, where you have to deal with very large numbers and great spaces, egalitarian feeling expresses itself in concentrating the ruling power upon one man. The States we come across in our experience of today and in our records of the past are in a vast majority of this egalitarian kind. The opposite type, the non-egalitarian, aristocratic states, in which an oligarchy is not only tolerated but revered, in which the feeling for equality is absent or weak, are rare indeed.

That England is an aristocratic state, a state governed by a class, is, states Mr. Belloc, "at once the most highly differentiated mark of England and the least appreciated. . . . *England is an Aristocratic State; the only Aristocratic State in white civilization.* England is the only State where the sole alternative to Aristocracy – Active Monarchy – is forgotten and feels foreign." In another passage he maintains that "the error made by foreign observers in the past (notably by the French), especially the absurd idea that England is in some way especially 'democratic', is disappearing. On the contrary, the wealthy classes of other countries, particularly of the United States, find in England a refuge from egalitarian society."

Mr. Belloc traces the historical development of the class government of England, showing that it was not

imposed, but grew from within: "Aristocracy is from below." He analyzes in detail the advantage and disadvantage of this type of state: the unrivalled power in the world it possesses at its height, its sure decline flowing from its very nature. He lists some of the signs taken to indicate that Aristocratic England is now in decadence, but does not here affirm – as he has elsewhere – that this alleged decadence is a fact.

In defining England as Protestant, Mr. Belloc finds the essence of Protestantism to be "anti-Catholicism", along with certain positive characteristics which have become weakened and less differentiated; though "the essential feeling of hostility against Rome and all the Catholic culture of Europe is as strong as ever". He associates Protestantism, including Anglo-Catholicism, with the national spirit, and speaks of the various denominations as making up "the National Church", to which "international things, Roman or other, are hateful. . . . For Protestantism is not the religion of the English. Patriotism is the religion of the English."

In treating of England as Commercial Mr. Belloc uses the economic analysis which he has put into his three invaluable books: *The Servile State*, *Economics for Helen*, and *The Restoration of Property*. His restatement of his views in this special connection are particularly illuminating and would well bear quotation if there were room in this review. It must suffice to recommend the whole book, and especially these pages, to readers of THE AMERICAN REVIEW.

S. C.